The Effects of Parenting Styles on a Preschool Aged

Child's Social Emotional Development

By

Brook Berg

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Dr. Jim Lehmann

The Graduate School

University of Wisconsin-Stout

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**University of Wisconsin- Stout**
**Menomonie, WI**

**Author: Berg, Brook**

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**Abstract**

A preschool aged child's social emotional development can be influenced in many ways; one of which being the early style in which their parent uses to raise them. This study examined the relationship between social emotional development of preschool aged children and three identified parenting styles, authoritarian, authoritative and permissive. Identifying social emotional development in preschoolers by behaviors related, but not limited to: play, self esteem, tantrums, interaction with people, disposition, transitions and behavior, were used to assess the child's social emotional development.

A comprehensive literature review was conducted to research social emotional development of young children, parenting styles, and the correlation between the two. Furthermore, 2 surveys were administered to a group of 14 parents at the Family Resource

Center for Eau Claire County to assess their parenting style and the development of their preschool aged child.

Upon completion of the literature review and data collection, the results indicated that those parents using authoritative parenting practices had children who scored highest on the social emotional development screening tool. Recommendations were made in the areas of positive parenting practices as well as for future studies.

**The Graduate School
University 0f Wisconsin- Stout
Menomonie, WI**

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through this program closes, and another journey begins.

"The aim of education should be to teach us rather how to think, than what to think -

rather to improve our minds, so as to enable us to think for ourselves, than to load the memory

with thoughts of others."

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**Chapter 1: Introduction**

The social emotional development of a preschool aged child influences many attributes of a young child's life, and parenting plays a role in how each child acquires developmentally appropriate social and emotional skills. There are three types of parenting styles. *Authoritative* parents tend to develop clear guidelines and expectations for their children, while providing lots of nurturing and love. They are consistent with rules, but can be flexible too. *Authoritarian* parents tend to set high standards and guidelines, and obedience is required. Authoritarian parents equate love with success and are not as nurturing as the other two styles of parenting. *Permissive* parents have little or no expectations for their children. They often view their children as friends and have few limits imposed.

Having developmentally appropriate social emotional skills is crucial to mental health, interpersonal skills, and is the basis for relationship building. Developing a secure, positive self esteem, positive interactions with others and control over ones feelings during the preschool years is vital to future personality development. Because parents have significant influence over a young child's daily interactions and activities, thus is important to view the implications parenting styles have on the social emotional development in children. Often, parenting behavior is multifaceted, and many parenting practices are typically used in conjunction with one another. The domains of parenting, such as communication style, levels of responsiveness, and levels of control, are used in combination with one another to create an individual's overall parenting style. Thus, it is important to take into consideration the overall parenting style when understanding the effects that parenting behavior has on child outcomes (Perepletchikova & Kazdin 2005).

**Statement of the Problem**

The social emotional development is important for the growth and development of a child, thus the correlation between positive parenting and appropriate social emotional development. The importance of social emotional development is often times overlooked because of the emphasis placed on academic preparedness and achievement in young children. However, according to The Institute for Early Childhood Education and Research, research has been building to suggest that there is a strong link between young children's socio-emotional competence and their chances of early school success (Raver, 2002). In fact, studies demonstrated that social emotional knowledge has a critical role in improving children's academic performance and lifelong learning (Zins, Bloodworth, Weissberg, & Walberg, 2004).

Children who are aware of their emotions and have good planning skills by the time they enter school also have a lower risk for problems of aggression and anxiety disorders (Greenberg, Kusch, & Mihalic, 1998). Many parents are unaware of the implications of certain parenting styles on the development of their children. Because it is important that all young children are healthy in all aspects, taking a look at the causes of inappropriate social emotional development is imperative to the future of our youth and society. When children have a lack of social skills and behavior regulation, academic and peer success can be difficult. In addition to social emotional development, the way one parents their child also has an impact on their childhood. Based on the three parenting styles, Authoritative, Authoritarian and Permissive, we may be able to address the positive and negative behaviors associated with each parenting style. Little research has been done to further connect the two variables, and by conducting more research, we could determine the correlation and positively impact preschool aged children. Therefore, the purpose of this study will describe the extent to which parenting styles affect a preschool

aged child's social emotional development. More specifically, the study will address the following questions:

1) How do preschool aged children who attend the Family Resource Center for Eau Claire County score on the developmental screener, "Ages and Stages- Social Emotional Questionnaire"?

2) How do parents rank their own style of parenting based on the evaluation tool, "What's My Parenting Style?"

3) What is the correlation between the preschool aged children's social emotional development and the style of parenting used by their mother or father?

The need for this type of research is increasingly important, as young children are dealing with depression, anxiety and other mental health issues. If we are able to accurately indicate if parenting styles foster appropriate development of social emotional skills, parents and children will be able to work together to increase the mental health state of our young children. Violence in schools is on the rise, as well as bullying. When children are faced with delayed development, not only do they deal with the day to day issues of socialization and identification of emotions, but they also struggle with academic and peer successes. Furthering research on the effects of parenting on a preschool aged child's social emotional development will help create clarity and understanding into the world of a preschool aged child's mental health. This will also give parents the tools to improve both their parenting, and the development of their child. Because little research exists on this topic, the study will be able to fill a need regarding the relationship of parenting styles and social emotional development between parents and children.

For the basis of this research study, I will conduct a self assessment survey to determine which type of style each parents uses.  In many instances, parents will fit into a variety of categories, swaying between each parenting style.  However, based on the "What's Your Parenting Style" questionnaire, parents will find which style is most like them. After determining what style of parent they are, parents will also complete an assessment tool to indicate the score of their child's social emotional development.  The assessment tool will give children a number rating, 0-330, with a score of 70 indicating that the child does have a significant delay in the area of social emotional development. After the results of both questionnaires are tallied, a correlation between the social emotional development of the child and the parenting style will be evident.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between the social emotional development of preschool aged children and parenting styles.  By researching the correlation, one can contribute a better understanding of the impact of parenting characteristics on the interaction, social skills, behavior management and mental health of young children.  Children ages 3-5 and their parents, who utilize the Family Resource Center for Eau Claire County, will be participants in determining if the correlation is significant.

**Assumptions and Limitations**

The main assumption of this study presumes that parents who use the Authoritative parenting style, which measures a balance of positive and demanding characteristics will have children who score highest (score 0) on the ASQ-SE assessment tool.  The assumption lies with the basis that those parents who are extremely demanding or very unengaged will raise children who have slight or significant delays in social emotional development.  Limitations of this study

are that of the sample size, and the validity of parental evaluations. The participants are limited to those who attend programming at the Family Resource Center for Eau Claire County, and who have children age's three to five. The sample size of evaluation and assessment tools is based on twenty children and twenty parents. Because each parent is responsible for evaluating their own parenting style, the validity of their responses may limit the research study as well.

**Definition of Terms**

To understand key concepts throughout this study, it is important to highlight a few key terms.

**Authoritative Parenting Style**: Authoritative parents tend to develop clear guidelines and expectations for their children, while providing lots of nurturing and love.

**Authoritarian Parenting Style:** Authoritarian parents tend to set high standards and guidelines, and obedience is required.

**Permissive Parenting Style**: Permissive parents have little or no expectations for their children. They often view their children as friends and have few limits imposed.

**Delayed Social Emotional Development**: Behavioral or emotional responses of an individual are so significantly different in degree and / or kind from his or her generally accepted age appropriate, ethnic, or cultural norms, that they adversely affect educational performance in one or more areas: self care, social relationships, personal adjustment, academic progress, classroom behavior, or work adjustment.

**Chapter II: Literature Review**

The purpose of this study is to describe the extent to which parenting styles affect a preschool aged child's social emotional development. To facilitate the appropriate development, parents need to support the child's growing sense of self reliance, self esteem, behavior control and encourage the child to develop meaningful relationships with other adult models outside the family. The research that has previously been done on this topic will play an important part of this study, as findings in this area have shown that there is a correlation between the two variables.

**Social Emotional Development in Young Children**

Cognitive and social-emotional trajectories represent the two basic aspects of children's development, according to Feldman and Eidelman (2008). Cognitive development undergoes several periods of reorganization during the first 5 years. In the first year, cognitive growth primarily involves sensory learning, perceptual-motor integration, and simple attention. As the attention system matures during the second year and infants begin to use symbols, cognitive skills expand to include rudimentary concepts, planning, and goal-directed behavior. During the preschool age, with the rapid growth of language and the maturation of the prefrontal cortex, cognitive development involves the mastery of executive functions and the ability to employ complex semantic categories (Feldman & Eidelman, 2008).

Children's understanding and regulation of emotional displays and their associations with children's social competence have received a great deal of attention in the literature over the last decade. Children's successful management and display of emotions can be thought of as a form of emotional competence (Saarni, 1999). Halberstadt, Denham, and Dunsmore (2001) have articulated a useful distinction between the constructs of emotional competence and social

competence. Emotional competence is focused on aspects of using emotions to send and receive messages that are important to social interactions; in contrast, social competence refers to children's ability to function effectively in social interactions, usually with other children (Halberstadt, Denham, & Dunsmore, 2001). Although it is often recognized that there is some overlap between emotional competence and social competence, the latter is usually defined by one's social skills and peer status, whereas the former focuses on more intrapersonal qualities, such as the ability to understand or produce appropriate emotion signals (Halberstadt, Denham, and Dunsmore, 2001). Children's positive feelings about themselves are related to the parent-child relationship. Fancily processes, such as the quality of parent-child relationships, influence the development of a wide range of competencies during the preschool years and developing appropriate social emotional skills are important in a young child's life because it sets the foundation of one's concept of self and others for many years to come.

According to the University of Wisconsin-Extension, a strong self concept helps children believe in and rely upon themselves. They find the world friendly, rather than threatening. Children first need to know that they are loved and accepted for who they are. Then, with this as a basis, their natural impulse is to take that love and learn to contribute it to the world in a constructive way. So when we look at how important it is for a child to have appropriate social emotional skills, it is important to look at their surroundings more closely to indicate what factors influence their development.

**Social Emotional State of Parents**

Social Emotional Development doesn't just occur throughout the preschool years, but rather, social emotional development is a part of everyone's daily interactions. Therefore, the set of feelings and understanding about one's own emotions and the emotions of others are equally

as important for parents to understand in their role. Lagacé-Séguin and  d'Entremont proposed that parents who internalize versus those who fail to internalize the 'emotional' knowledge of themselves and their children exhibit at least two distinct parenting characteristics.  These characteristics have been defined as an emotion coaching and an emotion dismissing typology, respectively.  Much like an athletic coach teaches children how to play a sport, emotion coaching parents recognize the feelings are a part of normal life.  They accept their child's expression of feelings, even negative ones such as anger or sadness.  These parents view feelings as an opportunity to teach their child about the world of emotions and to build a closer relationship with their child. (Gottman, J. & DeClaire, J, 1997).   The emotion coaching style is defined as parents' awareness of emotions.  The emotion coaching style is defined as parents' awareness of emotions within themselves and their children, and the ability to use this awareness to benefit their child's socialization.  Parents who use this particular style are aware of their own emotions, can talk about these emotions in a differentiated manner, are aware of these emotions in their children, and assist their children with their emotions.  Emotion coach's value a child's negative emotions as an opportunity for intimacy and can tolerate spending time with a sad, angry or fearful child without becoming impatient with the emotion. Gottman and DeClaire (1997) reported that this form of parenting is associated with children's increased trust of their feelings, better emotion regulation and more competent problem-solving.  Additionally, as compared with their peers, children of emotional-coaches tend to have higher self esteem, to perform better academically and to have more positive peer relations (Gottman & Declaire, 1997).

The emotion dismissing parenting style refers to a lack of awareness and therefore a diminished ability to deal with children's emotions.  Characteristically, such parents lack awareness of emotions within themselves and their children, fear being emotionally out-of-

control, are unaware of techniques to address negative emotions, and believe negative emotions to be a reflection of poor parenting skills (Gottman & DeClaire, 1997). Furthermore, instead of addressing displays of negative emotions, they ignore or dismiss emotions, attempt to rid the child of the negative emotions immediately, and strive to reassure the child that negative feelings always pass quickly without lasting effects. Children with dismissing parents are more likely to believe that their negative feelings, such as sadness and anger are not valid under any circumstances (Gottman & DeClaire, 1997). Parental emotional styles are theoretically distinct from the traditional parental disciplinary styles.

As adults build positive relationships with their children, their potential influence on the child's development grows exponentially. Children cue in on the presence of meaningful and caring adults; they attend differentially and selectively to what adults say and do, and they seek out ways to ensure even more positive attention from adults (Gail, 2003).

**Various Styles of Parenting**

Perceptions, attitudes and beliefs are important factors in understanding parenting styles and their potential impact on children's development. An individual's beliefs about childrearing styles and parenting goals may be important considerations in understanding childrearing strategies. Information about how family relations are actually experienced in families may extend knowledge about influences on parents' choices about parenting styles and the views of family relations in their own homes. In brief, according to De Lisi, 2007 *Authoritarian* parents enforce rules strictly, value obedience, and discourage verbal give and take with their children. *Authoritative* parents also set firm rules but provide rationales to the child, solicit input from the child, and are warm and involved with the child. *Permissive* parents do not impose limits, rarely discipline the child, are warm and accepting, and often offer unconditional support (2007).

More specifically, Authoritarian parents don't feel they need to explain their rules or the reasons why they expect their children to do certain things.  The main focus of these parents is on what their children do wrong and the punishment for misbehavior is often harsh.  Should a child question a rule, they will often hear from their parents, "Because I said so". Parents that use this style feel they must be in control all the time. They parent by a set of rules that must be followed. Children have little or no freedom. Discipline is usually a form of reward and punishment.  Children learn early to please their parents to gain a reward. They may behave because they fear their parents.  Children either go along and have a hard time learning to think for themselves or they may rebel in reaction to the controlling methods of their parents (LeFebvre, 1997).

Authoritative parents typically have clear expectations for their children and enforce reasonable limits.  Children are given limited choices to help them learn and experience the consequences of their choices and that their decisions count.  Giving choices balances freedom with responsibilities.  When children have some control and ownership in their lives they are more cooperative and have better self-esteem. Parents focus on encouragement and acknowledgment of good behavior.  Parents focus on discipline that teaches not a one that intimidates with punishment or promotes good behavior with inappropriate rewards.

And lastly, permissive parents have concerns that their children will not like them if they set limits or they see themselves as their children's friend and not their parent who is there to guide and set limits. These parents allow freedom with little or no responsibility.  As their children get older these parents may feel they have no power to make changes in their children's misbehavior.  Children without limits have no sense of responsibility, have trouble with relationships and the rights of others and can find the world a difficult place. It is unfair to raise a

child without limits or to keep changing the limits that are set. Children do not need or want freedom without limitations (LeFebvre, 1997).

The authoritative, permissive, and authoritarian styles have been examined most extensively and are associated with different levels of social and cognitive competence in preschool children, children in middle childhood, and adolescents (De Lisi, 2007). The results of these and other studies are consistent and lead to clear conclusions about optimal childrearing styles. Children of authoritative parents earn higher grades in school; are more achievement oriented, independent, self-reliant, friendly, and cooperative; are less depressed, anxious, and dependent; and show lower levels of internalizing and externalizing behavior problems (De Lisi, 2007). Furthermore, the relation between authoritative parenting and positive cognitive and social development in children appears to occur across social classes and ethnic groups (De Lisi, 2007). Thus, the research literature shows the positive aspects of authoritative childrearing styles over the alternative types of styles.

If the authoritative parenting style is that of 'best practice', one would assume that parents would strive to adopt those characteristics into their parenting practices. However, because all three styles are still widely used, it is apparent that many parents are unaware of the effects their childrearing practices have on their children. According to De Lisi (2007), many parents are likely to be unaware of findings that appear in the formal research literature, or they may have been exposed to incomplete or unclear presentations of research findings that were summarized in the general media rather than in the scientific media. In addition, research on parent beliefs and parent knowledge reveals that beliefs stem from multiple sources, including one's own history as a child, observations from everyday life, socio-historical and socio-cultural factors, personal experiences as a parent, one's own parenting goals, and opinions presented in

popular literature ( McGillicuddy-De Lisi & Sigel, 1995). These factors might lead parents to value permissive or authoritarian styles and thus continue to observe these childrearing styles. Some parents believe that that obedience and punishment are the basis for rearing children of strong character and competence. Similarly, other possible reasons for enduring beliefs in permissive childrearing styles could be that the primary force driving parental behavior is not a focus on socializing the child but beliefs that their role as parent should focus on achieving a happy child with high self-esteem who has harmonious relationships with the parents and others in the family. Such individuals might be more likely to become permissive parents because they think this childrearing approach will achieve these goals of producing a well-adjusted child with positive family relations. Also, parents may believe that the path to a happy, well-adjusted child lies in creating and maintaining positive family relationships, rather than in an authoritative approach that enhances development through the child's success in meeting challenges within a warm environment that supports the child's own efforts to address demands (De Lisi, 2007). The social emotional development is an important part of a child's ability to interact with others and create an environment suitable for learning, growing and developing.

**Parenting and its Correlation with Emotions and Self Esteem**

Because the self esteem of a child has a correlation with the social emotional development of children, it is important to examine this broad topic, self esteem, as it relates to parenting styles and the emotional development in children. Parents can create an environment where children experience acceptance, encouragement, responsibility and love that builds and nourishes their self esteem. High self esteem is not something that you can teach a child. Self Esteem is built gradually, little by little, in the day-to-day interactions that are complied into a

child's image of him or herself. Because the interaction is so important between the child and parents, it is important to look at how each parenting style might play a role in the self esteem of a preschool aged child. Amato and Ochiltree (1986) found that interpersonal resources such as, parental expectations, help and attention were more strongly related to the development of self-esteem of young children than family structure resources, such as parental income, education, and occupation. This finding is consistent with research that implies the importance of the home environment and the quality of the parent-child relationship in the building of the child's self-esteem (Amato & Ochiltree, 1986).

Additional studies have shown that parenting style has been found to predict child well-being in the domains of social competence, academic performance, psychosocial development, and problem behavior. Research based on parent interviews, child reports, and parent observations consistently finds that children and adolescents whose parents are authoritative rate themselves and are rated by objective measures as more socially and instrumentally competent than those whose parents are non-authoritative (Baumrind, 1991).

Children and adolescents whose parents are uninvolved perform most poorly in all domains. In general, parental responsiveness predicts social competence and psychosocial functioning, while parental demands associated with instrumental competence and behavioral control (i.e., academic performance and deviance). These findings indicate: Children and adolescents from authoritarian families (high in parental demand, but low in responsiveness) tend to perform moderately well in school and be uninvolved in problem behavior, but they have poorer social skills, lower self-esteem, and higher levels of depression. Children and adolescents from indulgent homes (high in responsiveness, low in parental demand) are more likely to be

involved in problem behavior and perform less well in school, but they have higher self-esteem, better social skills, and lower levels of depression.

In reviewing the literature on parenting style, one is struck by the consistency with which authoritative upbringing is associated with both instrumental and social competence and lower levels of problem behavior in both boys and girls at all developmental stages (Baumrind, 1991). The benefits of authoritative parenting and the detrimental effects of uninvolved parenting are evident as early as the preschool years and continue throughout adolescence and into early adulthood. Although specific differences can be found in the competence evidenced by each group, the largest differences are found between children whose parents are unengaged and their peers with more involved parents. Differences between children from authoritative homes and their peers are equally consistent, but somewhat smaller (Baumrind, 1991). Just as authoritative parents appear to be able to balance their conformity demands with their respect for their children's individuality, so children from authoritative homes appear to be able to balance the claims of external conformity and achievement demands with their need for individuation and autonomy.

**Relations Between Social and Emotional Competence**

Children's successful management and display of emotions can be thought of as a form of emotional competence. Emotional competence is focused on aspects of using emotions to send and receive messages that are important to social interactions; in contrast, social competence refers to children's ability to function effectively in social interactions, usually with other children (Halberstadt, Denham & Dunsmore, 2001). Although it is often recognized that there is some overlap between emotional competence and social competence, the latter is usually

defined by one's social skills and peer status, whereas the former focuses on more intrapersonal qualities, such as the ability to understand or produce appropriate emotion signals (Halberstadt, Denham, & Dunsmore, 2001). The ways in which children's emotional competence is related to their social competence with peers. In general, children who are better able to manage their emotional displays and exhibit more positive affect are rated by both teachers and peers as more socially competent. Children learn the different rules and norms apply to different everyday settings and they can adapt accordingly (Halberstadt, Denham, & Dunsmore, 2001).

There are a variety of behaviors related to making and maintaining positive social relationships in the preschool years such as: initiate and maintain social interactions, understand and follow the rules, solve social problems, regulate their emotions, demonstrate trust in others. For example, young children who display more positive affect were found to be given more attention by play partners. Similarly, when parents report that their children display lower levels of negative effect, children tend to be rated more favorably by teachers. Finally, observed positive affect among kindergarten-age children is related to children being rated by teachers and peers as more socially competent both concurrently and one year later in first grade (Isley, O'Neil, Clatfelter & Parke, 1999).

Other aspects of children's emotional competence in addition to the positive or negative nature of their affective displays are also related to social competence with peers. Specifically, researchers have been interested in the role of children's emotion regulation as a predictor of social competence. One can assume that children who are able to regulate the intensity of their emotional displays will be a more acceptable social interactive partner. A specific form of emotional competence that requires a blend of appropriate expression and appropriate regulation of emotions is the use of display rules. A common definition of display rules is that they are the

expression of culturally appropriate responses to a given situation regardless of the felt emotions (Davis, 1995; Saarni, 1984; Underwood, Coie & Herbsman, 1992). For example, the culturally appropriate display rule for receiving a gift is to react positively even when one is not particularly pleased with the item. Moreover, researchers have identified instances where display rules are more likely to be followed. Specifically, Zeman and Garber (1996) found that for feelings of anger and sadness, children indicate controlling their emotions (thus, adhering to cultural display rules) with their peers more than with their parents. In recent years, researchers have examined the relation between children's use of display rules and aspects of social development (Davis, 1995; McDowell, O'Neil & Parke, 2000; Saarni, 1984). Specifically, researchers have found that display rule use by fourth-grade children was related to both teacher and peer ratings of social competence (McDowell, O'Neil & Parke, 2000). That is, when children reacted to a disappointing gift with more positive and fewer negative responses, they were seen as more socially competent by teachers and peers. Emotions researchers have suggested several ways in which parents may influence their children's emotional competence (Eisenberg, Fabes, & Murphy, 1998) including modeling of emotional competence, coaching, and control. Most work in this area has focused on the links between parental behaviors and children's reporting of the regulation or understanding of emotions. For example, Denham and Grout (1992) found that as mothers' levels of anger and contempt increased, children's anger was higher whereas their happiness levels were lower. More recently, McDowell, Kim, O'Neil, and Parke (2002) reported that when parents modeled more positive effect, children reported higher levels of socially appropriate ways of dealing with stressful, emotion-inducing events.

Another way in which parents may influence their children's emotional competence is the amount of acceptance or control of children's emotional displays during parent–child

interactions. Some researchers have suggested that parents who are more controlling of their children's emotions may be depriving their children of opportunities for learning about the causes and consequences of inappropriate emotional displays (McDowell & Parke, 2000). Conversely, parents who used more constructive coaching as opposed to more control over children's emotions had children who were better able to regulate emotions and engage in self soothing (Gottman, 1997). Other researchers have demonstrated that less parental control is related to more positive aspects of children's emotional functioning. For example, Eisenberg, Fabes, and Murphy (1996) have reported that when parents were more accepting of their children's emotional displays, children developed more positive coping strategies. Isley and her colleagues found that parental controlling behavior was negatively related to both social acceptance and children's own affective displays (Isley, O'Neil & Parke, 1996).

**Chapter III: Methodology**

**Introduction**

The social emotional development of a preschool aged child influences many attributes of

a young child's life, and parenting plays a role in how each child acquires developmentally

appropriate social and emotional skills. Therefore, the purpose of this study will describe the

extent to which parenting styles affect a preschool aged child's social emotional development.

More specifically, the study addressed the following questions: How do preschool aged children

who attend the Family Resource Center for Eau Claire County score on the developmental

screener, "Ages and Stages- Social Emotional Questionnaire"? How do parents rank their own

style of parenting based on the evaluation tool, "What's My Parenting Style?" What is the

correlation between the preschool aged children's social emotional development and the style of

parenting used by their mother or father?

**Subject Selection and Description**

The population of participants for this study was 14 parents of preschool aged children

who attend programs through the Family Resource Center for Eau Claire County, Inc. in Eau

Claire, WI. Three of the participants were male and 10 were female. They were between 20 and

40 years old and came from various economic and ethnic backgrounds.

**Instrumentation**

Two separate surveys, each included in the appendix were administered to each of the

parents. The first survey was titled, "What's Your Parenting Style" and was developed by Joan

E. LeFebvre, a professor in Department of Family Development from the University of

Wisconsin- Extension program. The instrument has been utilized by various people for various

purposes and was not created for the purpose of this study. This survey is a reliable depiction of how each parent rates themselves as parents from a series of 16 I agree or I disagree statements.

The second survey administered to parents was titled, "Ages and Stages Questionnaire: Social Emotional Development". It is an evidence-based screening tool to detect delays in the area of social emotional development. The survey was published in 2002 by Brooks Publishing and was not created for the purposes of this particular study. This tool was chosen because of its validity and reliability as well as the researchers experience with the tool.

**Data Collection Procedures**

As stated before, two separate surveys were given to each of the parents to complete. The researcher handed the two surveys to parents during a program at the Family Resource Center for Eau Claire County. The parents were asked to fill out the survey, and then place them face down on the table. The researcher picked up the completed surveys after the class had ended and all participants filled out the survey. The first survey, "What's Your Parenting Style" consisted of 16 statements. Each parent was asked to place a check mark along side of the statements that they believed to be true. Then based on the instructions in the survey, the researcher scored the checked statements to determine which parenting style was more indicative of each particular parent. For example, if a parent checked statement numbers 3, 7 and 9, they were identified by the scoring tool to be positive/authoritative parents.

The second survey, "Ages and Stages Questionnaire: Social Emotional Development" is a series of 33 questions. The instrument was again handed out during a program at the Family Resource Center for Eau Claire County and collected after the program by the researcher. Each of the questions asks participants to place a check mark on which of the following best fits their

child today: most of the time, sometimes, or rarely or never. Examples of the questions asked

are: Does your child look at him when you talk to him, can your child settle himself down after

periods of exciting activity, can your child name a friend? The researcher then compiled the

scores of this survey. Each answer to each question was given a number 0, 5 or 10. Then based

on the total score ( 0 lowest, 330 highest) the researcher added scores to determine if the child is

above or below the cutoff score for developmentally appropriate social emotional development.

**Data Analysis**

The data of this research was analyzed by looking at correlations and relationships. More

specifically, the data from the "What's Your Parenting Style" survey was compared to the scores

of the "Ages and Stages Questionnaire: Social Emotional Development (ASQ-SE)". Each survey

had a correlating letter and number to ensure that the researcher could identify which parenting

style associated with what ASQ survey. The results were presented in table format by parenting

style category (authoritarian, authoritative or permissive) and by the ASQ-SE score.

An additional table was also created to easily identify the correlation between the two

variables, parenting styles and social emotional development. By grouping the parenting styles

together and the age appropriate and non age appropriate ASQ-SE scores, the researcher could

clearly identify if such a correlation exists.

**Limitations**

This study did not require parents to give any information regarding their ethnicity or

economic status, which may have been helpful in determining further correlations about

parenting styles. In addition, the sample population was small, prohibiting a larger look at the

correlation between the two variables. Also, in order to get accurate results, both surveys

required parents to be honest and aware of their own behaviors and beliefs, as well as those of their children. A limitation to this study is the biased opinion many parents hold in regards to their own parenting practices and the development of their child.

**Chapter IV: Results**

**Introduction**

The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between the social emotional development of preschool aged children and parenting styles. By researching the correlation, one can contribute a better understanding of the impact of parenting characteristics on the interaction, social skills, behavior management and mental health of young children. More specifically, the study addressed the following questions, as noted in chapter one:

1) How do preschool aged children who attend the Family Resource Center for Eau Claire County score on the developmental screener, "Ages and Stages- Social Emotional Questionnaire"?

2) How do parents rank their own style of parenting based on the evaluation tool, "What's My Parenting Style?"

3) What is the correlation between the preschool aged children's social emotional development and the style of parenting used by their mother or father?

If we are able to accurately indicate if parenting styles foster appropriate development of social emotional skills, parents and children will be able to work together to increase the mental health state of our young children. Therefore, parents of preschool aged children who attend the Family Resource Center for Eau Claire County were asked to complete two surveys. The first, "What's Your Parenting Style" to determine which of the three parenting styles, authoritarian, authoritative or permissive, best represented their parenting strategies. Next, parents were asked to complete the "Ages and Stages Questionnaire: Social Emotional Development" (ASQ-SE) to determine if their child's social emotional development was age appropriate, or was defined as delayed.

**Item Analysis**

The first two questions in this study focused on, how do preschool aged children who attend the Family Resource Center for Eau Claire County score on the developmental screener, "Ages and Stages- Social Emotional Questionnaire"  and how do parents rank their own style of parenting based on the evaluation tool, "What's My Parenting Style?"

**Table 1**

**Parenting Styles and ASQ-SE Scores**

| Parent | Parenting Style | ASQ-SE Score |
|--------|-----------------|--------------|
| A | Positive/ Authoritative | 35 |
| B | Positive/ Authoritative | 5 |
| C | Positive/ Authoritative | 0 |
| D | Positive/ Authoritative | 5 |
| E | Unengaged/ Permissive | 60 |
| F | Positive/ Authoritative | 0 |
| G | Positive/ Authoritative | 30 |
| H | Positive/ Authoritative | 25 |
| I | Positive/ Authoritative | 5 |
| J | Demanding/ Authoritarian | 60 |
| K | Demanding/ Authoritarian | 100 |
| L | Positive/ Authoritative | 5 |
| M | Positive/ Authoritative | 15 |
| N | Demanding/ Authoritarian | 90 |

The results show that 10 out of the 14 parents were best represented by the authoritative parenting style. Three parents' scores identified them in the Authoritarian category and 1 parent in the Permissive parenting styles category. The results from this study also show that 2 of the children represented scored the highest possible ASQ-SE score, which is 0. There were 2 children who fell below the cut-off score of 70, identifying them to have a significant delay in social emotional development. Two of the children had a score of 60, which does not qualify them as having a delay in development, yet is very close to the cut-off score of 70.

The third question in the study focused on whether or not there was a correlation between the two variables. More specifically, the study asks what is the correlation between the preschool aged children's social emotional development and the style of parenting used by their mother or father?

**Table 2**

**Correlation between parenting styles and social emotional development**

| Parenting Style | Age Appropriate Social Emotional Development | Non Age Appropriate Social Emotional Development |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Authoritative | 10 | 0 |
| Authoritarian | 1 | 2 |
| Permissive | 1 | 0 |

The results from assessing the correlation between the parenting styles and the score of the ASQ-SE determines that 0 of the children whose parents used authoritative parenting styles had a significant delay in their social emotional development. It also showed that 0 out of the 1

child of a permissive parent has significant delays as well. However, there were 2 children who were identified as having a significant delay in social emotional development, and both children's parents used the authoritarian parenting style. In addition, 1 of the children parented by an authoritarian parent did not fall below the cut-off of 70, but did score 60, which is significantly close to the cut-off score.

**Chapter V: Discussion**

The intent of this study was to determine the relationship between the social emotional development of preschool aged children and their parent's respective parenting styles. By researching the correlation, one can contribute a better understanding of the impact of parenting characteristics on the interaction, social skills, behavior management and mental health of young children. Fourteen parents of preschool aged children who utilize the Family Resource Center for Eau Claire County participated in determining if the correlation is significant.

The researcher conducted a study based on parental participation of two surveys. The first survey was chosen to identify which of the three parenting styles, Authoritative, Authoritarian and Permissive were used by each parent. The second survey, The ASQ-SE was an evaluation tool that each parent took by answering questions about their child's development at this current time. The two surveys were analyzed for correlation between the results.

**Limitations**

This study did not require parents to give any information regarding their ethnicity or economic status, which may have been helpful in determining further correlations about parenting styles. In addition, the sample population was small, prohibiting a larger look at the correlation between the two variables. Also, in order to get accurate results, both surveys required parents to be honest and aware of their own behaviors and beliefs, as well as those of their children. A limitation to this study is the biased opinion many parents hold in regards to their own parenting practices and the development of their child.

**Conclusions**

Several conclusions can be made from this research regarding the relationship between parenting styles and a preschool aged child's social emotional development.  The first research question was how do preschool aged children who attend the Family Resource Center for Eau Claire County score on the developmental screener, Ages and Stages- Social Emotional Questionnaire?  Based on the results of this study, 2 of the 14 children were determined to be below the age appropriate level for social emotional development, identifying them to have a significant delay in that area of development.  On the contrast, 12 of those children fell within the average or typical range for social emotional development.  One can say that based on these findings, preschool aged children who participate in programs through the Family Resource Center for Eau Claire County on generally on track with other children their age in social emotional development.  Because the social emotional development is so critical at the early stages of life, the findings indicate a correlation with previous research that regulating emotions and maintaining age appropriate social interactions are important factors when assessing a child's development in the early years.

The second research question asked, how do parents rank their own style of parenting based on the evaluation tool, "What's My Parenting Style?" Based on the results of this study, only 1 parent identified themselves as a Permissive Parent.  Previous research has shown that parents who are permissive allow their children significant amounts of freedom with little or no responsibility.  As their children get older these parents may feel they have no power to make changes in their children's misbehavior.  Children without limits have no sense of responsibility, have trouble with relationships and the rights of others and can find the world a difficult place.

Fortunately, based on the results, permissive parenting is not a style typically practiced by parents who utilize the Family Resource Center for Eau Claire County.

Of the 14 parents surveyed, 3 of those parents identified themselves as Authoritarian parents.  Although the results are higher than those identifying themselves as permissive parents, the number is still significantly low.  Authoritarian parents feel they must be in control at all times and their set of rules that must be followed.  Children have little or no freedom and discipline is usually a form of reward and punishment.  Based on our findings, parents who utilize the Family Resource Center for Eau Claire County typically do not engage in the type of parenting practices indicative of authoritarian parenting.

Data from this study clearly indicates that the majority of parents surveyed identify themselves as authoritative parents.  These types of parents focus on encouragement and acknowledgment of good behavior.  Authoritative parents focus on discipline that teaches not a one that intimidates with punishment or promotes good behavior with inappropriate rewards.  Because this method is seen as best on all measures, according to the University of Wisconsin-Extension, the findings of this research show that the typical parent of preschool aged children at the Family Resource Center for Eau Claire County is an authoritative parent.

The last, and most significant question based on the study is, what is the correlation between the preschool aged children's social emotional development and the style of parenting used by their mother or father?  Because the focus of this study was to in fact determine if such a correlation exists, the results indicate that yes, there is a correlation between the parenting style and the social emotional development of a preschool aged child.  The only 2 children whose ASQ-SE score placed them in a category to have a significant delay in development both had

parents who were identified as authoritarian parents. Some researchers have suggested that parents who are more controlling of their children's emotions may be depriving their children of opportunities for learning about the causes and consequences of inappropriate emotional displays (McDowell & Parke, 2000). This finding correlates with the results of this study, showing that those parents high in demand and low in responsiveness have poorer social emotional development than of those whose parents utilize authoritative or permissive parenting practices. As stated in previous chapters, authoritative parents often balance discipline with love and concern. Permissive parents often place most of their interaction with children as a friend and focus very little on discipline.

In addition, those parents who identified themselves as authoritative parents did not have any children who scored nearing a delay on the ASQ-SE screener. The highest score was 35 (cut-off for delay is 70) for a child of an authoritative parent, reiterating the importance of positive parenting practices have a positive effect on a child's development.

**Recommendations**

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, the researcher recommends that parents of preschool aged children engage in authoritative parenting practices to assist in the growth and development of their child's social emotional development. When parents engage in parenting practices that set high standards and expectations, yet listen and encourage independence, the children tend to show higher levels of social emotional development that those childrearing styles of permissive or authoritarian.

Furthermore, it is clear that more research needs to be done in order to confirm and substantiate the correlation between parenting styles and the social emotional development of

preschool aged children.  In the future, research should be done with a larger sample population

and additional variables to differentiate ethnicity and gender, and its effects on the study.

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**Appendix A: What's Your Parenting Style?**

# Parenting
### the
# Preschooler

**UW Extension**

Joan E. LeFebvre
Family Living Agent

http://www.uwex.edu/ces/flp/pp/

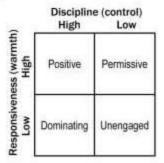## What's Your Parenting Style?

Understanding parenting styles gives insight into both parent behaviors and outcomes for children.

### Dimensions of a Parent's Behavior

- Parent **responsiveness** (warmth and nurturing) refers to the degree to which a parent responds to a child's needs in an accepting, supportive manner.
- Parent **discipline** (control and demandingness) refers to the extent a parent expects and demands mature, responsible behavior from the child.

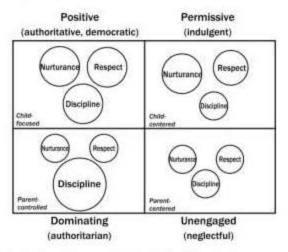|  | Discipline (control) High | Discipline (control) Low |
|---|---|---|
| **Responsiveness (warmth) High** | Positive | Permissive |
| **Responsiveness (warmth) Low** | Dominating | Unengaged |

### Parenting Styles

- Parents who nurture and discipline their child are **positive**. Positive parents set high standards and expectations, consistently enforce rules, and encourage independence. A give-and-take communication, with the ability to listen is key to positive parenting.
- Parents who nurture their children, but do not discipline them much or well are **permissive**. Although permissive parents show love and give attention, they make few demands and set no guidelines or structure for their children.

- Parents who discipline their children but are not very nurturing of them are **dominating**. Strict parents value obedience and discourage independence. They do not like their authority questioned.
- Parents who neither nurture nor discipline their children are **unengaged**. This parent is often referred to as uninvolved as a minimal amount of time and effort is spent with the child. The parent is unavailable to the child. Drug use and immaturity of a parent are possible reasons for unengaged parenting.

In addition to nurturing and discipline, another aspect of parenting is showing respect. Respect means giving children freedom of thought and expression. It's just as important as "love" and "limits." It's giving your child the ability to express thoughts and feelings openly which leads to higher self-esteem and confidence. Positive parenting begins with a balanced approach of nurturing, disciplining, and respecting as is illustrated here.



Positive (authoritative, democratic) — Child-focused — Nurturance, Respect, Discipline

Permissive (indulgent) — Child-centered — Nurturance, Respect, Discipline

Dominating (authoritarian) — Parent-controlled — Nurturance, Respect, Discipline

Unengaged (neglectful) — Parent-centered — Nurturance, Respect, Discipline

What are the outcomes for children when parents use a particular parenting style?

| Positive | Permissive |
|---|---|
| **Best on all measures** | |
| High self-esteem and confidence | High self-esteem and confidence |
| Low levels of anxiety and depression | Low levels of anxiety and depression |
| High on social competence (empathy, emotional control, communication, conflict management) | Generally high on social competence |
| High on respect and responsibility | Low on respect and responsibility |
| Good academic performance | Underachieve academically |
| Little problem behavior | A lot of problem behavior |
| | **Worst on all measures** |
| Low self-esteem and confidence | Low self-esteem and confidence |
| High levels of anxiety and depression | High levels of anxiety and depression |
| Low on social competence | Low social competence |
| Moderate on respect and responsibility | Very low respect and responsibility |
| Average academic performance | Poor academic performance |
| Little problem behavior (except in accepting authority) | A lot of problem behavior |
| **Dominating** | **Unengaged** |

To help you begin to discover your parenting style, check all of the items you believe to be true for you.

1. ____ I believe that it is better not to have rules than to worry about breaking them.
2. ____ Children should obey their parents and not talk back.
3. ____ Children should be given choices.
4. ____ Children can get along pretty well if you just leave them alone.
5. ____ My own problems are so consuming I don't have time or energy for my child.
6. ____ What I do won't make a difference, so I've given up with my child.
7. ____ Sometimes children have a point. I try to listen to them.

8. ____ I make the rules of my household. Children should be punished for not following these rules.
9. ____ Children should be allowed their own sense of individuality.
10. ____ I have high standards which I expect my child to understand and I enforce rules consistently.
11. ____ Parents should do as much as they can for their children (making their beds, getting their snacks, dressing them).
12. ____ When my child misbehaves, I yell and threaten.
13. ____ If I discipline my child, I am afraid he/she won't love me.
14. ____ I know what's best for my child, after all I'm the parent.
15. ____ I let my child do what he/she wants because I want to avoid conflict.
16. ____ I have so many other things to do, the children will just have to make it on their own.

| Positive | Demanding | Permissive | Unengaged |
|---|---|---|---|
| 3 | 2 | 1 | 4 |
| 7 | 8 | 11 | 5 |
| 9 | 12 | 13 | 6 |
| 10 | 14 | 15 | 16 |

Find the numbers you checked below.

Most parents find they have characteristics of more than one style. It's important to assess your parenting style and make adjustments, if and where you feel necessary, to achieve the best outcomes for your child.

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# Appendix B: Ages and Stages Questionnaire: Social Emotional

| Please read each question carefully and<br>1. Check the box ❑ that best describes your child's behavior *and*<br>2. Check the circle ○ if this behavior is a concern | MOST OF THE TIME | SOMETIMES | RARELY OR NEVER | CHECK IF THIS IS A CONCERN |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Does your child look at you when you talk to him? | ❑ z | ❑ v | ❑ x | ○ |
| 2. Does your child cling to you more than you expect? | ❑ x | ❑ v | ❑ z | ○ |
| 3. Does your child talk and/or play with adults she knows well? | ❑ z | ❑ v | ❑ x | ○ |
| 4. When upset, can your child calm down within 15 minutes? | ❑ z | ❑ v | ❑ x | ○ |
| 5. Does your child like to be hugged or cuddled? | ❑ z | ❑ v | ❑ x | ○ |
| 6. Does your child seem too friendly with strangers? | ❑ x | ❑ v | ❑ z | ○ |
| 7. Can your child settle himself down after periods of exciting activity? | ❑ z | ❑ v | ❑ x | ○ |
| 8. Does your child cry, scream, or have tantrums for long periods of time? | ❑ x | ❑ v | ❑ z | ○ |
| 9. Is your child interested in things around her, such as people, toys, and foods? | ❑ z | ❑ v | ❑ x | ○ |

TOTAL POINTS ON PAGE ___

3

ASQ:SE    48 months/4 years

| | MOST OF THE TIME | SOMETIMES | RARELY OR NEVER | CHECK IF THIS IS A CONCERN |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 10. Does your child stay dry during the day? | ☐ z | ☐ v | ☐ x | ○ |
| 11. Does your child have eating problems, such as stuffing foods, vomiting, eating nonfood items, or _____? (You may write in another problem.) | ☐ x | ☐ v | ☐ z | ○ |
| 12. Do you and your child enjoy mealtimes together? | ☐ z | ☐ v | ☐ x | ○ |
| 13. Does your child do what you ask her to do? | ☐ z | ☐ v | ☐ x | ○ |
| 14. Does your child seem happy? | ☐ z | ☐ v | ☐ x | ○ |
| 15. Does your child sleep at least 8 hours in a 24-hour period? | ☐ z | ☐ v | ☐ x | ○ |
| 16. Does your child seem more active than other children his age? | ☐ x | ☐ v | ☐ z | ○ |
| 17. Does your child use words to tell you what she wants or needs? | ☐ z | ☐ v | ☐ x | ○ |
| 18. Can your child stay with activities he enjoys for at least 10 minutes (not including watching television)? | ☐ z | ☐ v | ☐ x | ○ |

TOTAL POINTS ON PAGE ___

| | MOST OF THE TIME | SOMETIMES | RARELY OR NEVER | CHECK IF THIS IS A CONCERN |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 19. Does your child use words to describe her feelings and the feelings of others, such as, "I'm happy," "I don't like that," or "She's sad"? | ☐ z | ☐ v | ☐ x | ◯ |
| 20. Can your child move from one activity to the next with little difficulty, such as from playtime to mealtime? | ☐ z | ☐ v | ☐ x | ◯ |
| 21. Does your child explore new places, such as a park or a friend's home? | ☐ z | ☐ v | ☐ x | ◯ |
| 22. Does your child do things over and over and can't seem to stop? Examples are rocking, hand flapping, spinning, or _____ . (You may write in something else.) | ☐ x | ☐ v | ☐ z | ◯ |
| 23. Does your child hurt himself on purpose? | ☐ x | ☐ v | ☐ z | ◯ |
| 24. Does your child follow rules (at home, at child care)? | ☐ z | ☐ v | ☐ x | ◯ |
| 25. Does your child destroy or damage things on purpose? | ☐ x | ☐ v | ☐ z | ◯ |
| 26. Does your child stay away from dangerous things, such as fire and moving cars? | ☐ z | ☐ v | ☐ x | ◯ |

TOTAL POINTS ON PAGE ___

ASQ:SE    48 months/4 years

| | | MOST OF THE TIME | SOMETIMES | RARELY OR NEVER | CHECK IF THIS IS A CONCERN |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 27. | Can your child name a friend? | ☐ z | ☐ v | ☐ x | ○ |
| 28. | Does your child show concern for other people's feelings? For example, does she look sad when someone is hurt? | ☐ z | ☐ v | ☐ x | ○ |
| 29. | Do *other* children like to play with your child? | ☐ z | ☐ v | ☐ x | ○ |
| 30. | Does *your child* like to play with other children? | ☐ z | ☐ v | ☐ x | ○ |
| 31. | Does your child try to hurt other children, adults, or animals (for example, by kicking or biting)? | ☐ x | ☐ v | ☐ z | ○ |
| 32. | Does your child show an interest or knowledge of sexual language and activity? | ☐ x | ☐ v | ☐ z | ○ |
| 33. | Has anyone expressed concerns about your child's behaviors? If you checked "sometimes" or "most of the time," please explain: | ☐ x | ☐ v | ☐ z | ○ |

_____

_____

_____

_____

TOTAL POINTS ON PAGE ___

# 48 Month/4 Year ASQ:SE Information Summary

Child's name: _____  Child's date of birth: _____

Person filling out the ASQ:SE: _____  Relationship to child: _____

Mailing address: _____  City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____

Telephone: _____  Assisting in ASQ:SE completion: _____

Today's date: _____  Administering program/provider: _____

## SCORING GUIDELINES

1. Make sure the parent has answered all questions and has checked the concern column as necessary. If all questions have been answered, go to Step 2. If not all questions have been answered, you should first try to contact the parent to obtain answers or, if necessary, calculate an average score (see pages 39 and 41 of *The ASQ:SE User's Guide*).

2. Review any parent comments. If there are no comments, go to Step 3. If a parent has written in a response, see the section titled "Parent Comments" on pages 39, 41, and 42 of *The ASQ:SE User's Guide* to determine if the response indicates a behavior that may be of concern.

3. Using the following point system:

| | |
|---|---|
| Z (for zero) next to the checked box | = 0 points |
| V (for Roman numeral V) next to the checked box | = 5 points |
| X (for Roman numeral X) next to the checked box | = 10 points |
| Checked concern | = 5 points |

Add together:

| | |
|---|---|
| Total points on page 3 | = _____ |
| Total points on page 4 | = _____ |
| Total points on page 5 | = _____ |
| Total points on page 6 | = _____ |
| Child's total score = | _____ |

## SCORE INTERPRETATION

1. *Review questionnaires*

   Review the parent's answers to questions. Give special consideration to any individual questions that score 10 or 15 points and any written or verbal comments that the parent shares. Offer guidance, support, and information to families, and refer if necessary, as indicated by score and referral considerations.

2. *Transfer child's total score*

   In the table below, enter the child's total score (transfer total score from above).

| Questionnaire interval | Cutoff score | Child's ASQ:SE score |
|---|---|---|
| 48 months/4 years | 70 | |

3. *Referral criteria*

   Compare the child's total score with the cutoff in the table above. If the child's score falls above the cutoff and the factors in Step 4 have been considered, refer the child for a mental health evaluation.

4. *Referral considerations*

   It is always important to look at assessment information in the context of other factors influencing a child's life. Consider the following variables prior to making referrals for a mental health evaluation. Refer to pages 44–46 in *The ASQ:SE User's Guide* for additional guidance related to these factors and for suggestions for follow-up.

   - Setting/time factors
     (e.g., Is the child's behavior the same at home as at school?, Have there been any stressful events in the child's life recently?)

   - Development factors
     (e.g., Is the child's behavior related to a developmental stage or a developmental delay?)

   - Health factors
     (e.g., Is the child's behavior related to health or biological factors?)

   - Family/cultural factors
     (e.g., Is the child's behavior acceptable given cultural or family context?)