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Sociocultural and Parenting Factors Affect Children's Cognitive Development Through Mastery Motivation

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Abstract

Human development involves multiple, dynamic interactions between a person and their environment. Children's environment has a significant impact on their current behavior and future development.^{1,2} Serving as a main component of this environment, parenting behavior influences a child's development, encouraging certain behavioral patterns, personality traits, and mental dispositions.^{1,3} Key subcomponents of parenting behavior include level of parental control and intrusiveness, involvement in child play, parenting style, and the amount of attention provided to the child.^{3,4,5}

Two primary factors shape these child-rearing practices: 1) cultural values, which indirectly guide the establishment of customs and behavioral norms such as child-rearing, and 2) socioeconomic status, which affects the amount of resources and stimulation a child receives.^{1,3,6} One specific developmental outcome affected by parenting is mastery motivation, a psychological force describing an individual's independent, persistent attempts to solve or master a challenging task.⁷

Although mastery motivation is intrinsic and relatively stable, it is still malleable to multiple environmental influences, especially parental factors.^{2,7,8} In general, less parental control and more allowance of exploratory play stimulate opportunities for more optimal development.^{2,5} Previous research on infants and young children linked mastery motivation to increased self-regulation and persistence in challenging tasks, heightened belief in self, encouragement of autonomy, and improved sensorimotor skills as a result of practice.^{2,7,8} Importantly, the latter are positively related to children's future cognitive development and academic outcomes.^{4,6,7}

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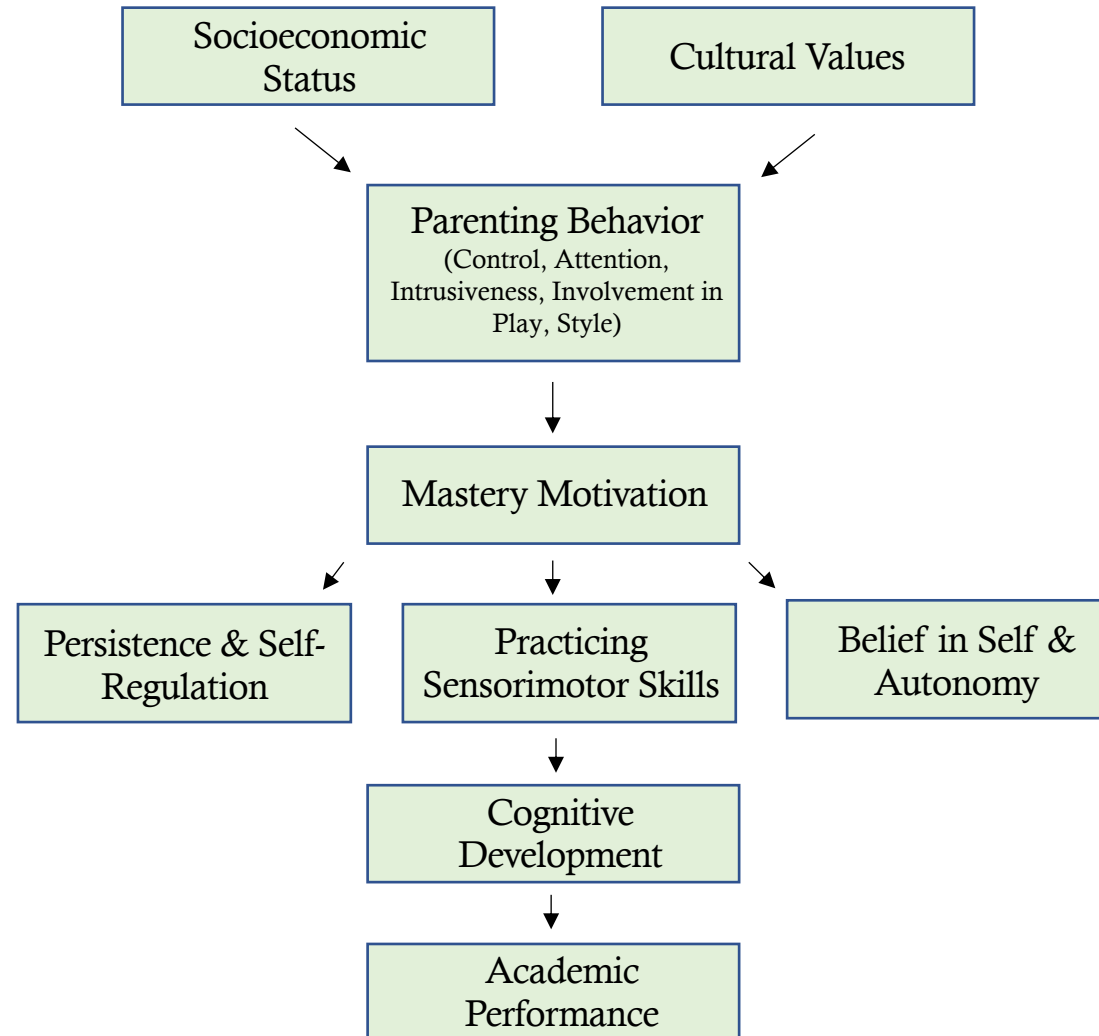
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