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. Serving as a main component of this environment, parenting behavior influences a child's development, encouraging certain behavioral patterns, personality traits, and mental dispositions. 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.

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. 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.

Although mastery motivation is intrinsic and relatively stable, it is still malleable to multiple environmental influences, especially parental factors. In general, less parental control and more allowance of exploratory play stimulate opportunities for more optimal development. 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. Importantly, the latter are positively related to children's future cognitive development and academic outcomes.
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.2,3,6 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 Importantly, the latter are positively related to children’s future cognitive development and academic outcomes.4,6,7

References


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