2009-01-01

Relationship Found Between Parenting Styles and Sibling Relationships in Families Raising a Child with a Disability

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Original Publication Citation
C. Jackman, B. L. Mandleco, (29). Relationship Found Between Parenting Styles and Sibling Relationships in Families Raising a Child with a Disability.

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Jackman, Corinne and Mandleco, Barbara L., "Relationship Found Between Parenting Styles and Sibling Relationships in Families Raising a Child with a Disability" (2009). All Faculty Publications. 42.
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Purpose

• Examine parental perceptions of parenting styles and sibling relationships according to
  - Parent gender
  - Sibling gender
  - Type of disability
• Determine if there is a linkage between parenting styles and sibling relationships

Demographics

• 124 mothers; 108 fathers
• Most families: Caucasian, two parents raising a child with disability (CWD)

Method

• Parents independently completed
  - Parenting Practices Report
  - Schaefer Sibling Inventory of Behavior
• Descriptive and univariate statistics calculated

Results

### Significant Differences in Sibling Relationship Variables According to Sibling and Parent Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mothers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involvement</td>
<td>3.28</td>
<td>3.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empathy</td>
<td>3.92</td>
<td>4.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fathers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empathy</td>
<td>3.84</td>
<td>4.15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Significant Differences in Variables According to Parent Gender**

- Mothers
  - Involvement: 3.28 (Male) vs. 3.59 (Female)
  - Empathy: 3.92 (Male) vs. 4.26 (Female)
- Fathers
  - Empathy: 3.84 (Male) vs. 4.15 (Female)

### Significant Differences in Variables According to Type of Disability

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>Authoritative Parenting</th>
<th>Authoritarian Parenting</th>
<th>Permissive Parenting</th>
<th>Sibling Kindness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Orthopedic</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Mental Retardation</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Multiple Disabilities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Autism</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other Disabilities</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Conclusion

- Mothers were more authoritative than fathers
- Both parents rated female siblings more empathetic than male siblings
- Parenting styles and sibling kindness vary according to type of disability
  - Parents more authoritarian if child has orthopedic condition
  - Kindness highest in families raising a child with multiple disabilities
- Authoritative parenting positively related to kindness, involvement, and empathy for both parents
- Authoritarian parenting negatively related to kindness and empathy for both parents
- Authoritarian parenting negatively related to involvement for fathers only
- Permissive parenting positively related to avoidance for mothers only

### Recommendations

- Encourage authoritative parenting
- Include a focus on fathers in parenting interventions especially if CWD has an orthopedic condition
- Help male siblings develop empathy
- Encourage kindness in siblings of children with a variety of disabilities

### References
