

Research article

PARENTAL ROLES IN CHILDREN'S ACADEMIC SUCCESS AND DEVELOPMENT OF POSITIVE MORAL AND SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

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Abstract

The paper discussed the roles of parents in academic success, development of positive moral and social behaviour of children. It highlighted the concept of development as quality change in organization and function of the child which affects different aspects of the child's life such as mental, social, moral, physical and spiritual wellbeing. The paper further discussed effective parenting as the process of promoting and supporting the physical, social, moral and intellectual development of a child from infancy to adulthood. The role of parents in academic achievement of their children were outlined in the paper. Thus it identified that parents can help their children to achieve highly in academics through; creating study time, providing and checking working materials such as exercise books, establishing contact with the child's school. The paper further summarized the roles of parents in social and moral development of their children, and identified that parents should be role models or act what they teach, guide children to respect human dignity, show them unconditional love, create time for the children, use authoritative rather than authoritarian parenting style, teach children to resolve conflict and learn to

apologize for wrong doings. The paper concluded that every opportunity requires a responsibility. Parents who invest in their children's developmental process will not regret and the children will grow to become successful and useful to themselves and the society as a whole.

Keywords: Academic achievement, Development, Moral development, Parenting style, Social development

Introduction

Observation has shown that children become the walking stick of their parents at old age, for this to come to bear, a high level of investment by the parents on their children is required. The oxford dictionary defines a child as a young human being below the age of puberty who has little or no experience in a particular area. By this lack of experience therefore, the child is a victim of environmental influence (that is from the home, society, school and friends). The foundation of child development is laid by the home, that is why the Bible directs, "train up a child in the way he should go and when he is grown up, he will not depart from it". This charge is given to parents who must nurture their children to save them from being vulnerable to adverse environmental influence. To nurture a child means to provide all that is needed for the child's inborn or biological capabilities to blossom it includes the provision of care and attention, teaching and guiding. The home is the first school of the child where the child learns and gains foundational experiences in morals ethics, cultural values, religion, language habits, skills etc from parents.

The eminent danger in our contemporary society is that many parents have become too busy to give attention to their roles in child training, this duty is left in the hands of care givers. The consequence of this insensitivity by parents is that the child will lack a guiding code, and will easily fall prey to social and moral vices in the environment. The role of parents in child development cannot be suitably substituted by any other practice.

Concept of development

Development is the sum total of quality changes which occur in an individual as a result of growth, learning and maturity. It is noticed in the individual organization and function. These changes occur in the physical structure of the individual, mental or cognitive functioning, social behavior and moral quality. Development results from the interaction between hereditary forces inherent in the genetic composition of the individual and forces within the individuals environment. Child optimum development depends greatly on effective parenting.

Effective Parenting

According to Wikipedia encyclopedia, parenting is the process of promoting and supporting the physical, emotional, social and intellectual development of a child from infancy to adulthood. Parenting refers to the aspects of raising a child aside from the biological relationship.

Parenting is effective when the parents;

- i. Create a stable nurturing home environment for children and are positive role models.
- ii. Provide moral and spiritual guidance.
- iii. Set limits and consistency in discipline.
- iv. Provide consequence for a child's behavior
- v. Accept responsibility for the total development of the child.

- vi. Guide the child in making sound and healthy life decisions through open communication.
- vii. Boost the self-esteem of the child through praising accomplishment
- viii. Make time for the children and attend to their problem individually.
- ix. Make communication with children a priority.
- x. Show unconditional love to children.

Role of parents in academic achievement of children

The child's success in academic is highly determined by the level of parental concern and home variables. Several researches including David, Tapor, Calkins (2010) reveal that parent involvement in child's education is consistently found to be positively associated with a child's academic performance. They conclude that children whose parents shows a higher level of involvement in their education have been found to achieve better grades in academics than those whose parents are less involved.

Since the home gives the background support for children academic excellence; the parents are under obligation to provide an environment conducive to learning at home. Six interrelated aspect of the home environment that are conducive to academic success as pointed out by Epstein (2012) are:

1. **Task structure:** this involves ways that parents engage their children at home regarding the kind of activities children perform at home. Are academic or intellectual activities encouraged? Are they only engaged in home chores sweeping, washing, cleaning, selling, cooking etc.
2. **Authority structure or Parenting style:** is how authority is exercised in the home. Are the parent's authoritarians, democratic, authoritative or care free? Authoritative parents, set firm limits and demand maturity of their children, rely on discipline techniques based on reasoning. They respect the child's point of view. While authoritarian parents are rigid in enforcing rules and seldom accept the child's point of view. The authority structure at home determines the level of child's self concept, and confident to approach task, authoritarian parenting creates a wide gap between children and parents because of the tyranny approach, unlike democratic or authoritative style. Thus, the wider gap between parent and children the more difficult it is for parents to understands academic problems of the children.
3. **Reward Structure:** These are ways which parents recognize advances in learning and rewarding intellectual program made by children. Rewards are reinforces which maintain or increase the occurrence of an expected behavior. They simply include praise, or various types of gifts. A child that gets reward develops self confidence, and positive work habits.
4. **Evaluation Structure:** there are ways in which parents assess child's performance in school. Parents are advised to frequently check their children exercise books so as to have an idea of their progress in academic.
5. **Time Structure:** Ways in which parents manage children's time for school work and other activities in the house especially, television watching, a study time has to be created.
6. **Contact Structure:** ways in which parents find out about the child from the school and from the teacher. a wide gap between the school, the teacher and parents should not exist. This gap between stake holders provides a hiding place for the child's mischief. Parents are advised as much as possible

endeavour to honor invitations from their child/ward's schools, and establish positive communication link with the school in the interest of their children.

Summary of what parents should do for children to succeed in academics

- i. Children should not be over worked in the house .
- ii. Avoid parenting style that will scare children away and create a wide gap between you and your children.
- iii. Provide learning and working materials for the children, (exercise books, pencils, biro, text books, work books, etc)
- iv. Check children's exercise books regularly.
- v. Reward children intellectual and academic progress to motivate them
- vi. Guide the children in their homework or hire a teacher to provide educational assistance for children at home.
- vii. Regulate activities at home and create study time for the children.
- viii. Encourage children by showing positive attitudes towards education
- ix. Attend PTA meetings to get first hand information about the learning trends in your child's schools
- x. pay your children school fees promptly to avoid child's molestation and absence from school.

What is social development?

Social development refers to a process which a child acquires increasing ability to get along well with himself and others in the society. Through his constant interaction with his social environment. It also refer to the process by which a person acquires the necessary knowledge, skills and disposition that makes him an acceptable member of his group (Reutlinger, 2008).

Parental involvement in development of children's social behaviour

Parents should be aware that the child is not born with social qualities, they are acquired through the constant interaction of the child with his environment. Social development is otherwise a process of socialization. Family is named as the most important primary agency for socialization of the child.

The following are some general guidelines for enhancing positive social behaviour

1. Use of parent-child and siblings relationship: Research has shown that warm trusting and family relationship lay the round work for healthy social development in children.
2. Be a role model: Practice what you teach eg. Show self confidence, being friendly and kind to people around you and visitors. Helping others respecting oneself and others.
3. Get to know your child friends. Its important to know your child's friend so you can closely observed his/her social behaviours and guide where necessary.
4. Reward positive behaviours like praising your child's treatment of others: I love the way you kept calm when your sister was yelling at you.
5. Encourage constructive and creative activities, avoid plays:Games that encourage aggressive play.
6. Guide children to respect human dignity by teaching that every human being is very important in his/her own accord.

7. Give opportunities for children to practice social behaviour. Kids learn social skills first from you, but more from their peers. The more chances children have to interact with others, the faster they learn social skills.
8. Teach children to use words than combat: Rather than hit. Highlight how it makes someone feel to be hit, encourage them to learn apologizing when they hurt someone.
9. Teach them to learn to resolve conflicts and accept conflict resolution appropriately.
10. Respect other people's opinion and ideas so they can learn from them.

Some sign that your child might need more social coaching from you and/or teaching

- ❖ Lack at least one or two close mutual friends
- ❖ Has trouble in winning or losing gracefully
- ❖ Doesn't show empathy when others are hurt or rejected
- ❖ Acts bossy or insists on his own way a lot
- ❖ Cant seem to start or maintain a conversation
- ❖ Using a louder voice than most children
- ❖ Seems constantly ignored or victimised by other children or constantly tease or annoys other children

Moral Development

Moral development focuses on the emergence of change, and understanding of morality from infancy through adulthood, morality is defined as principles for how individuals ought to treat one another with respect to justice, others welfare and right (wikipedia).

Moral development involves the formation of a system of values or standard on which to base decision concerning "rights" and "wrongs" or "good" and "bad" (psychology encyclopedia).

How Parents Can Help Moral Development in Children

The role of parenting continues to stand out as a significant factor on how children develop the sense of right and wrong, it is not only a result of hereditary traits passed on from parents to child, but the pattern of interaction between those parent and child dyad. Some of the parental practices that help children to develop good moral conscience are;

(i) Attachment, Responsiveness and Warmth

Goodnow (2000) states that "early mutually responsive parent-child interaction are predictive of a later moral orientation.

(ii) Use of induction.

This involves the use of explanation or reasoning with a child in order to convey parental standards. It also involves a request for children to act accordingly and emphasize consequence for the child's behaviour (both of the child and others) parents who use induction tend to expect that the child makes amends for his misbehaviour. Induction rather than force is considered the most "powerful influence on children's moral development" it is so powerful because it engages the child's understanding for the reason for choosing a particular behaviour.

(iii) Positive Gentle Guidance

One of parents greatest concerns about their children is compliance. And infact a child's degree of committed compliance rather than non compliance consistently predicts their moral development (Kochduska, 2005) when parents gently direct their children's behaviour in ways that are not using power assertion, young children are much likely to engage in committed compliance. Parents use of positive gentle guide actually predicts the young child's early conscience development, presocialbehaviour, feelings of guilt after wrong doing.

(iv) Parental attitude and relationship

Mahoney and Raver (2009) found that children are more likely to internalize if both parents are preaching the same message on morality. The approaches to moral building should not conflict. Parents should be united and have a common agreement in helping the child to determine good and bad.

(v) Display morals

Your own behaviour is a powerful teacher for your child. As his parent, your actions teach your child the moral you value. It is easy to say you value morals such as honesty, respect, loyalty, kindness and forgiveness. Children learn morals mostly by imitation, if they don't see you display these morals. It will be difficult to have them.

(vi) Create moral environment

The media is another great teacher of morals. Monitor the kind of programmes children watch on T.V asses the CDs and code certain channels.

(vii) Organize Family Altar

Here Bible scriptures are used to teach morals. There scripture form a reference point or guiding code for certain behaviours, children learn spiritual benefits or consequences for good and bad morals.

(viii) Instill discipline

Discipline is teaching a child to develop self control, and should not be mistaken for punishment. Discipline teaches children a particular behaviouror misbehaviour is bad because it violates the social order, thus promoting the development of internal control. Punishment only terminates a behaviour temporarily without internal control. In Africa, physical punishment such as beating, slapping, canning, kicking exercise drills are culturally accepted as means of behaviour control.

(ix) Make rules and set consequences in place for breaking these rules

The rules do not have to be long and complicated but they should be clear and few. If children are old enough, actively involve them in making the rules and setting down punishments for various types of misbehaviours.

(x) Spend quality time with children

When you spend time with the children, it gives both of you the opportunity to interface, parents listen to their children in the process actively make effort to find out what they think and feel.It gives parents a clue on the moral status of their children.

(xi) Show children love unconditionally and never lose hope in them because of their moral mistakes. When children know that they are loved, they will be more inclined to want to behave in acceptable manner. Don't ever write off a child.

Conclusion

It takes a lot of hard work and commitment to help children learn good morals and social behaviour. It also requires so much effort to help children succeed in academics. However, parents who invest so much time and resources in this venture have never regretted in the end. They will see the fruits of their hard labour. Notwithstanding that children will likely choose the life to live at maturity, but they will be building on the solid foundation laid by their parents. They will be happy, productive, exemplary and law abiding citizens in the society, above all, they will have good success.

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