

## Shared Responsibility For Discipline and Discipline Strategies Used by Mothers and Fathers

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## Egalitarian vs. Traditional

- Egalitarian parenting
  - Shared responsibility
  - Equal power between parents
  - Dual income
- Traditional parenting
  - Mother in charge of home and children
  - Father as breadwinner
- Egalitarian increasing over time

## Clinical Illustration

## Egalitarian Fathers

- High involvement in child-rearing (Bulanda, 2004)
- Low discipline
- Children more aggressive than in traditional families (Schoppe-Sullivan & Buckley, 2007)
- Parenting styles
  - Fathers: Authoritative
  - Mothers: Authoritative or permissive (Sabattini & Leaper, 2004)

## Definitions of “Traditional” Parenting

- Traditional parenting = power-assertive discipline
  - Religious and cultural influences
- Or, traditional = differentiated responsibility
  - Mother as primary disciplinarian, father disengaged (Sabattini & Leaper, 2004)
  - Father in charge of discipline, but not other child-rearing (Schoppe-Sullivan & Buckley, 2007)
- Are these two definitions of traditional parenting related?

## Aims

- What types of discipline do parents use in families where mother, father, or both are responsible for discipline?
- Are differentiated responsibility and power-assertive parenting related?
- Three types of parenting
  - Inductive discipline
  - Corporal punishment
  - Psychological aggression
- Impact of parental responsibility on child misbehavior

## Methods: Procedure

- University students from psychology subject pool
- Completed adult-recall Dimensions of Discipline Inventory (Straus & Fauchier, 2007) and other measures via web-based survey
- Reported on pre-adolescent period (10 or 13)
- DDI question about parents' relative responsibility for discipline
- 3 questions about power in parents' relationship

## Methods: Dimensions of Discipline Inventory

5-part self-report questionnaire

- A. Demographics
- B. Child misbehavior examples and frequency
- C. 26 discipline behaviors (x2 for mother and father)
- D. 23 items (x2 for mother and father) about discipline mode (e.g., impulsivity, consistency) and context (e.g., conflict with other parent)
- E. Respondent's appraisal of 26 discipline behaviors

## Methods: Responsibility & Power

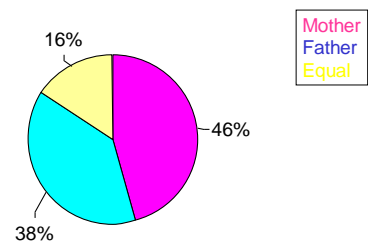
- Responsibility: Who had responsibility for disciplining you at age 10 (or 13)?
- Power:
  - Who made important family decisions?
  - Who had the final say when your parents disagreed?
  - Who had more power in your parents' relationship?

## Methods: Participants

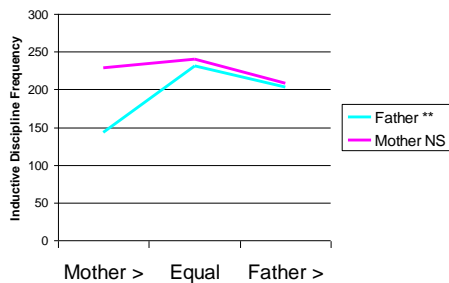
N	700
Age	19.4 (1.6)
% Female	72%
% Caucasian	94%

Excluded Ss with only one parent from analyses

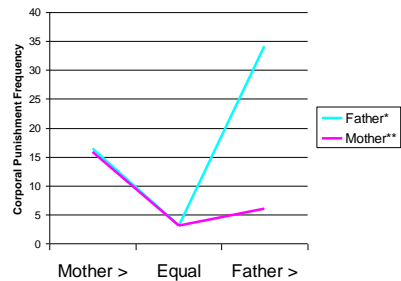
## Results: Distribution of Discipline Responsibility



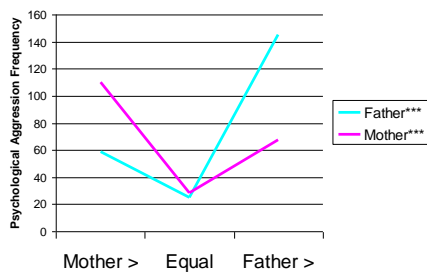
### Results: Inductive Discipline & Discipline Responsibility



### Results: Corporal Punishment & Discipline Responsibility



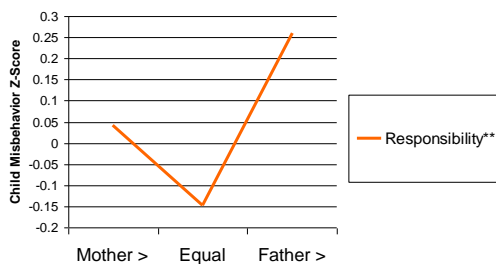
### Results: Psychological Aggression & Discipline Responsibility



### Results: Power

- Highly related to discipline responsibility
- Similar results to responsibility

### Results: Child Misbehavior and Discipline Responsibility



### Summary

- Egalitarian parents least likely to use corporal punishment or psychological aggression
- Contrary to prior research, egalitarian parents are equally or more likely than traditional parents to use inductive discipline
- As would be expected, the dominant parent tends to have a larger role in discipline
- Contrary to prior research, children of equal parents have fewer behavior problems, not more

## Conclusions

- Dynamics between parents are related to fathers' and mothers' use of discipline
- Two definitions of "traditional" parenting related: Differentiated responsibility and power-assertive discipline
- Egalitarian stereotype not supported
  - Children don't run wild
  - Active discipline instead of "We've tried nothing and we're all out of ideas"