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

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<tr>
<td><strong>N</strong></td>
<td>700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
<td>19.4 (1.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>% Female</strong></td>
<td>72%</td>
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<td><strong>% Caucasian</strong></td>
<td>94%</td>
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Excluded Ss with only one parent from analyses
Results: Distribution of Discipline Responsibility

- Mother: 38%
- Father: 46%
- Equal: 16%
Results: Inductive Discipline & Discipline Responsibility
Results: Corporal Punishment & Discipline Responsibility

Mother >

Father >

Corporal Punishment Frequency

Father*
Mother**
Results: Psychological Aggression & Discipline Responsibility

Psychological Aggression Frequency

Mother > Equal Father >

Father***
Mother***
Results: Power

- Highly related to discipline responsibility
- Similar results to responsibility
Results: Child Misbehavior and Discipline Responsibility

Child Misbehavior Z-Score vs. Mother, Equal, Father responsibility.

- Child Misbehavior Z-Score
- Mother > Equal
- Father > Equal

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”
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Other publications on the DDI and related issues can be downloaded from http://pubpages.unh.edu/~mas2

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Spanking, Discipline, Responsibility, & Power

Spank Frequency

Mother > Equal Father >
Father1 Resp*
Mother1 Resp*
Father2 Resp***
Mother2 Resp NS
Father Power**
Mother Power+
Parental vs. Marital

• Differentiated responsibility
  – Child-specific
  – Marital

• Responsibility vs. power?

• Division of childcare more relevant to parenting style than division of household duties (Sabattini & Leaper, 2004)
Hitting with an Object, Discipline Responsibility, & Power

Use Object Frequency

Mother > Equal Father >

Use Object Frequency

Mother > Equal Father >

Use Object Frequency

Mother > Equal Father >

Use Object Frequency

Mother > Equal Father >

Use Object Frequency

Mother > Equal Father >

Use Object Frequency

Mother > Equal Father >
Responsibility vs. Power

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mother &gt; responsibility</th>
<th>Equal responsibility</th>
<th>Father &gt; responsibility</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mother &gt; power</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal power</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>2%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Father &gt; power</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>12%</td>
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Results: Inductive Discipline & Power

![Graph showing comparison of Inductive Discipline Frequency and Power between Father and Mother with statistical significance notes: Father1 Resp NS, Mother1 Resp NS, Father2 Resp NS, Mother2 Resp NS, Father Power**, Mother Power*.](image-url)
Results: Corporal Punishment & Power

Corporal Punishment Frequency

- Father1 Resp+
- Mother1 Resp**
- Father2 Resp*
- Mother2 Resp**
- Father Power NS
- Mother Power*

Legend:
- Father1 Resp+
- Mother1 Resp**
- Father2 Resp*
- Mother2 Resp**
- Father Power NS
- Mother Power*
Results: Psychological Aggression & Power

Psychological Aggression Frequency

- Father1 Resp NS
- Mother1 Resp***
- Father2 Resp***
- Mother2 Resp*
- Father Power*
- Mother Power**