Stability of Parenting Profiles Observed in Low-Income African American and Latino Mother-Child Interactions

Nazly Dyer*, Margaret Tresch Owen*, Margaret O’ Brien Caughy**
*The University of Texas at Dallas, **University of Texas School of Public Health

Introduction

The importance of positive parenting practices, such as sensitivity, on children’s optimal development has been well established (Dallaire & Weinraub, 2005; Else-Quest, Clark, & Owen, 2011). However, relatively little is known about the stability of parenting styles over time and what factors contribute to stability and change.

In a longitudinal study of low-income African American and Latino preschool-aged children’s development, we examined:

• The stability of empirically-derived parenting styles based on observational ratings of mother-child interactions when children were 2 1/2 yrs and 3 1/2 yrs.

Method

Participants

- 340 mothers, from the Dallas Preschool Readiness Project
- 55% Boys, 45% Girls
- 44% (n = 149) African American, 57% (n = 191) Latina mothers
- 78% of African American and 67% of Latino families living below the Federal Poverty Level

Measuring Mothering Qualities:

Videotaped mother-child interactions with standard stimuli during the Time 1 and Time 2 home visit

• Global ratings of parenting qualities (5-point scales): sensitivity, positive regard, cognitive stimulation, detachment, intrusiveness, negative regard

Diverse Indicators of Risk Factors:

A cumulative risk index was formed based on the following dichotomous demographic risk indicators:

• Less than high school maternal education, extreme poverty, single parent family, residential move from T1 to T2, change in partner, change from partnered to single, 3+ children per adult

Dallas Preschool Readiness Project

This research was funded by the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Development (1R01HD058643-01A1).

Results

Characteristics Most Salient to Each Mothering Profile

- Child-Oriented
- Directive
- Withdrawn
- Harsh-Intrusive

Sensitivity
- Positive Regard
- Cognitive Stimulation

Intrusiveness
- Positive Regard
- Cognitive Stimulation

Detachment
- Some Intrusiveness
- Some Negative Regard

Intrusiveness
- Negative Regard

Stability of Mothering Profiles Derived from Latent Profile Analyses of Global Ratings of Mother-child Interactions – African American

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time 1</th>
<th>Time 2 n (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Child-Oriented</td>
<td>22 (50)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Directive</td>
<td>20 (40)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Withdrawn</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harsh-Intrusive</td>
<td>1 (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Findings

• 43% of African American mothers and 50% of Latina mothers stayed in the same groups across time

• 48% of all African American mothers and 77% of all Latina mothers were classified as only child-oriented or directive across time.

Discussion

• Among African American mothers, those who were child-oriented at Time 2 were either child-oriented or directive at Time 1, with the exception of 1 mother. The same was found among Latina mothers, with the exception of 4 mothers.

• What kind of stability matters? Does moving between child-oriented and directive make a significant impact on the developing child?