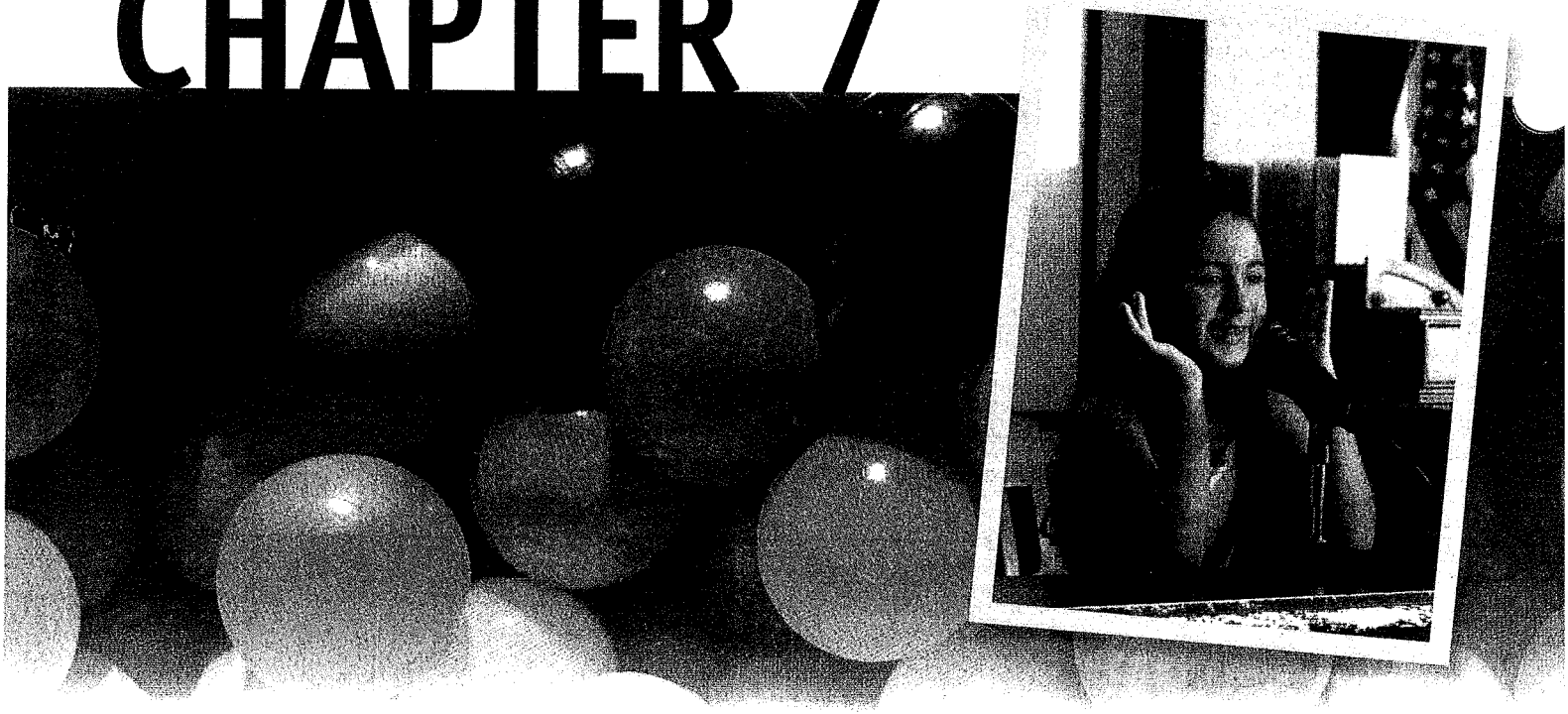
CHAPTER 7



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Settings for Development: Home, School, and Community

José's parents migrated from Honduras to Las Vegas when he was a baby. Leaving their close family was painful, but they knew their child could not have a future in their dangerous town.

At first, life was going well. They got green cards. Manuel joined the Culinary Workers Union. María trained as a Spanish-language EMT. Liberated from the horrifying conditions in her country, where parents confined their children to the house to keep them safe, María was thrilled to lavish love on her child. And lavishing love was easy because José was such a caring, talented boy. At age 3, José could put together puzzles that stumped children twice his age. He was picking up English beautifully, even though his parents spoke mainly Spanish at home.

When José was 8, the coronavirus hit. Manuel was permanently laid off. He started to drink. He would come home late and then yell at his wife. María fell into a depression, agonizing over whether to break her family apart. After she had that difficult conversation — "Papá and I will live separately" — her sweet boy cried for months. The timing of this painful talk couldn't have been more poorly planned. The next day, José was tested for the gifted program at school.

José's fluid reasoning and working memory were off the charts. But, while being bilingual was a blessing, José didn't make the gifted cutoff because his verbal comprehension scores were below the mean.

Since the vaccine, life is finally *going well. María found a tiny (but affordable!) apartment in the best school district in the state. She sings the praises of her new,*

CHAPTER OUTLINE

caring community, how everyone came together during the COVID crisis to shop for isolated older neighbors who were afraid to leave the house. She appreciates José's fifth-grade teacher for minimizing competition and appreciating each student's gifts. Most important, by stressing the contributions of every ethnic group in class, this consummate educator is teaching José an important lesson about life: You thrive as a "true American" when you embrace your own ethnicity, and cherish everybody else's roots, too.

How do children, such as José, react when their parents divorce? What was that test José took, and what strategies make children eager to learn? How important are caring neighbors and exceptional teachers in determining our success as adults? Here, we tackle these questions, and others, as I explore the settings within which children develop: home, school, and community.

While my discussion focuses on children around the world, in this chapter, I'll pay special attention to girls and boys, such as José, whose families differ from the traditional two-parent, middle-class, European American norm. So let's begin by scanning the tapestry of families in the twenty-first-century United States and compare our child-rearing arrangements to the wider world.

Setting the Context

Learning Outcomes

- Identify which type of U.S. family is most likely to be low-income.
- Explain what makes solo parenting so challenging.

Today, in the United States, the *traditional nuclear family* — heterosexual married couples with biological children — has dwindled to approximately half of all households. Another 20 percent are *blended families* — spouses divorced and remarried — so children have stepparents and, often, stepsiblings. One and a half million never-married couples are raising children; two million boys and girls have gay, lesbian, or bisexual parents. A growing number of children (1.3 million) are being raised by grandparents, too (HealthyChildren.org, 2020; Pew Research Center, 2015).

The most important distinction relates to the roughly 1 in 4 U.S. children living in single-parent households (see Figure 7.1a). With an alarming 2 *out of* 3 one-parent families classified as low-income in the pre-pandemic United States, most people raising children alone can barely make ends meet (see Figure 7.1b; Yang, Granja, & Koball, 2017).

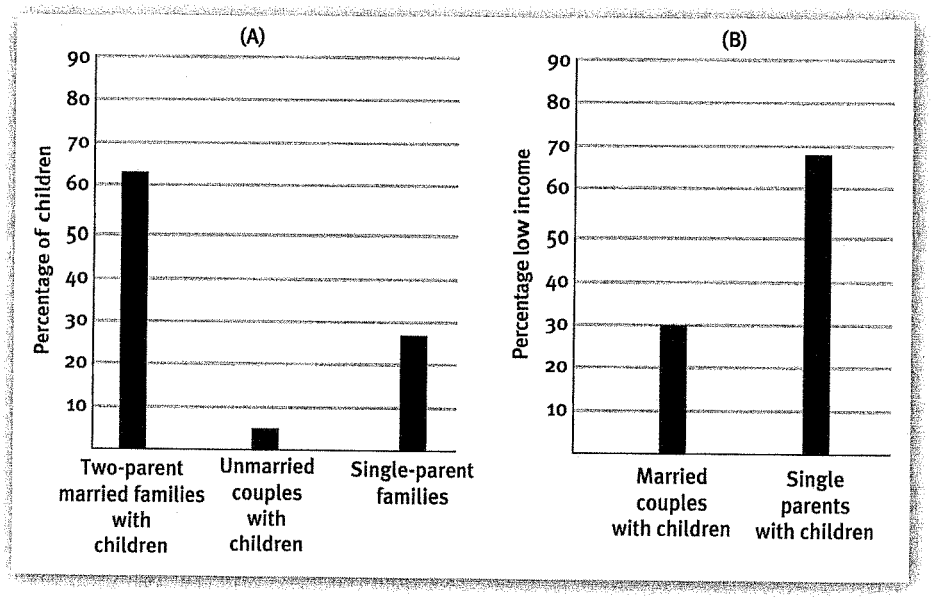


Figure 7.1: Living arrangements of children in U.S. families Part A shows that the two-parent married couple family is still the most common one. Part B shows the huge disparity in the proportion of two-parent families versus single parents earning less than $40,000 per year, the estimated earnings cutoff permitting a family of four to financially survive.

Data from HealthyChildren.org, 2020; Kramer, 2019; and Yang, Granja, & Koball, 2017

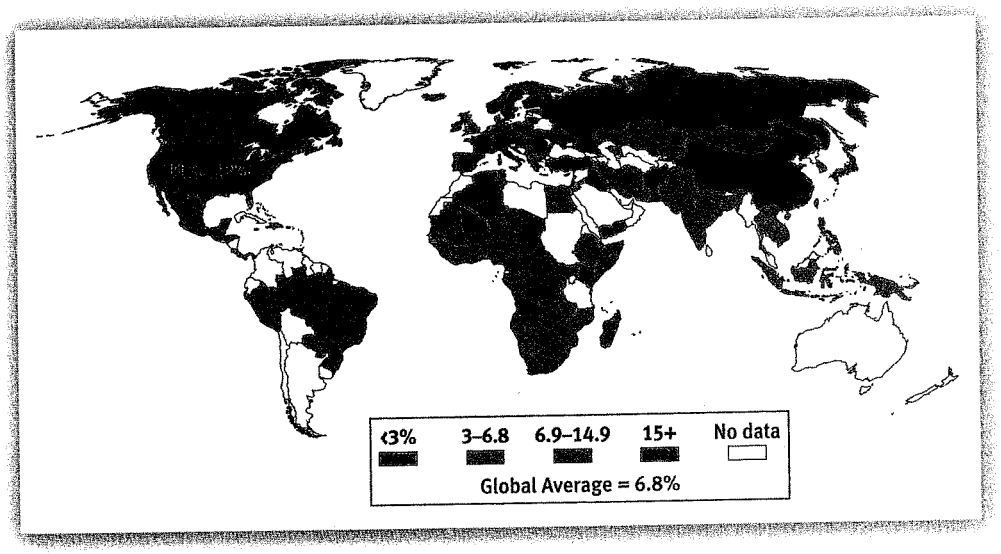


Figure 7.2: Percentage of children under age 18 in single-parent households worldwide In recent years, almost a quarter of U.S. children lived in single-parent homes, a far higher fraction than in other nations.

Data from Kramer, 2019

Actually, as Figure 7.2 shows, the United States is a global leader in its fraction of people raising children by themselves. Only 7 percent of the world's children live with one caregiver. In less developed countries, a common pattern is multigenerational households (Kramer, 2019). While their living conditions may be cramped, in poor nations, parenting demands are less intense because *many* caregivers are on the scene to take care of a child.

Based on the premise that socially distant solo parenting is not ideal, how can we help people be the best possible parents? What *is* the best possible parenting like?

Learning Outcomes

- Evaluate Baumrind's ideas.
- Identify resilient children's qualities.
- Contrast different ideas about the importance of parents.
- Summarize the research on corporal punishment, child abuse, and divorce.

Home

I discussed guidelines in earlier chapters: Parents should be *mind-minded* — sensitive to a child's temperamental needs. Is there a specific discipline style that works best? In landmark studies conducted a half-century ago, developmentalist Diana Baumrind (1971) decided *yes*.

Parenting Styles

Think of a parent you admire. What is that mother or father doing right? Now think of parents who you feel are not fulfilling this job. Where are they falling short? Most likely, your list will center on two functions: Are these people nurturing? Do they provide discipline or rules? By classifying parents on these two dimensions — being caring and child-centered, and giving "structure" — Baumrind (1971) spelled out the following **parenting styles**:

parenting style In Diana Baumrind's framework, how parents align on love and discipline.

authoritative parents In the parenting-styles framework, the best child-rearing style, when parents provide ample love and family rules.

authoritarian parents In the parenting-styles framework, when parents provide many rules but rank low on love.

- **Authoritative parents** rank high on nurturing and limit-setting. They have clear standards and provide lots of love. In these homes, there are specific bed and homework times. However, if a daughter wants to spend time with a friend from out of town, parents might relax the rule that homework must be finished before dinner. They could let a son postpone his regular 9:00 P.M. bedtime for a special event. Although authoritative parents firmly believe in structure, they understand that rules don't take precedence over human needs.

- **Authoritarian parents** are more inflexible. Their child-rearing motto is, "Just do what I say." In these families, rules are not negotiable. While authoritarian parents may love their children deeply, their child-rearing style can seem uncaring and cold.

- **Permissive parents** are at the opposite pole. Their parenting mantra is, "Provide total freedom and unconditional love." In these households, there are no set bedtimes or homework demands. Here, the child-rearing principle is that children's wishes rule.
- **Rejecting-neglecting parents** are the worst of both worlds — low on structure and love. In these families, children are neglected, ignored, and emotionally abandoned. They are left to raise themselves. See Figure 7.3 for a recap of the parenting styles.

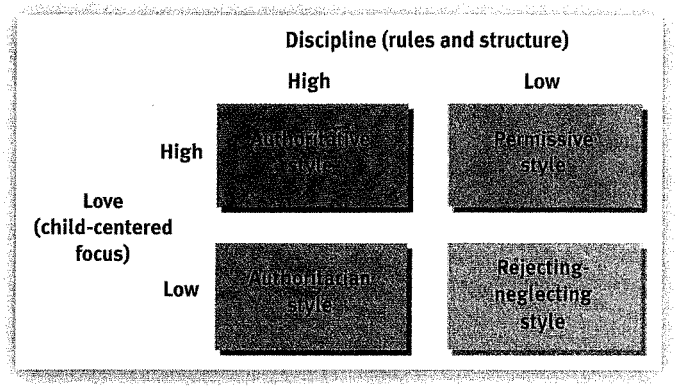


Figure 7.3: Parenting styles: A summary diagram
Information from Baumrind, 1971

In relating the first three discipline styles to children's behavior (the fourth was added later), Baumrind found that children with authoritative parents were more academically successful, well-adjusted, and kind. Global research confirms this finding (Lansford, Godwin, and others, 2018; Lansford, Rothenberg, and others, 2018). From India (Sahithya, Manohari, & Vijaya, 2019) to Belgium (Kuppens & Ceulemans, 2019), authoritative parenting is ideal.

permissive parents In the parenting-styles framework, when parents provide few rules but lots of love.

rejecting-neglecting parents In the parenting-styles framework, the worst child-rearing approach, when parents provide little discipline or love.

Decoding Parenting in a Deeper Way

These studies offer a beautiful blueprint for the right way to raise children: Provide clear rules and lots of love. However, if you classify your own parents on these dimensions, you might have problems. Perhaps one parent was more permissive and the other authoritarian. Or maybe your family's rules randomly varied from authoritative to permissive over time.

One study suggested that the worst situation for a teenager's mental health occurred when families had inconsistent rules (Dwairy, 2010). Imagine how frustrated you would be if your parents sometimes came down very hard on you and, in *similar situations*, seemed not to care!

Still, aren't there times when parenting styles should vary — situations when children need a more authoritarian or permissive approach? This question brings me to two classic critiques of Baumrind's parenting styles.

Critique 1: Parenting Styles Naturally Vary from Child to Child Perhaps your parents came down harder on a brother or sister because that sibling needed more discipline, while your personality flourished with a permissive style. As I've been highlighting in this book, good parents should vary their child-rearing, depending on the unique personality of each child.

Unfortunately, however, as I also stressed in earlier chapters, when children are "high-maintenance" (difficult to raise), due to an *evocative* process, parenting styles tend to change for the worse. A father might regularly hit a rambunctious toddler. A mother could wall herself off emotionally from a daughter who is depressed. Moreover, worldwide, developmentalists find (no surprise) that prosocial children *produce* caring parents (Putnick and others, 2018). Wouldn't you be thrilled to lavish love on a child who was exceptionally caring and kind?

So, again, parenting is far more *bidirectional* and child-evoked than Baumrind assumed (Wittig & Rodríguez, 2019a). And, the parenting styles framework ignores the role of culture in shaping child-rearing goals.

Critique 2: Parenting Goals Reflect One's Society In global surveys, researchers find that — in addition to being authoritative — good parents adjust their child-rearing to their culture's norms. If a society advocates living with elderly parents (the traditional collectivist ideal), it's best to socialize children to follow this practice. If a nation prioritizes independence (the Western individualistic goal), parents who raise children to leave home during emerging adulthood have more competent boys and girls (Lansford, Godwin, and others, 2018).

Table 7.1: Checklist for Identifying Your Special Parenting Priorities (Melody)

Rank the following goals in order of their importance to you, from 1 (for highest priority) to 8 (for lowest priority). It's OK to use the same number twice if two goals are equally important to you.

_____ Producing an obedient, well-behaved child

_____ Producing a caring, prosocial child

_____ Producing an independent, self-sufficient child

_____ Producing a child who is extremely close to you

_____ Producing an intelligent, high-achieving scholar

_____ Producing a well-rounded child

_____ Producing a happy, emotionally secure child

_____ Producing a spiritual (religious) child

What do your rankings reveal about the qualities you most admire in human beings?

acculturation Among immigrants, the tendency to become similar to the mainstream culture after time spent living in a new society.

An interesting example of the power of culture to shape child-rearing comes from exploring **acculturation**, meaning how immigrants adjust to a new society. You might be surprised to know that first-generation immigrants to the United States — from every nation — are more reluctant to spank their children than their U.S.-born counterparts (Ragavan and others, 2019). (Unfortunately, as you will see later, in its use of physical punishment, the United States is an outlier, too.) And, while you might marvel at an Asian American neighbor who insists that his children study for hours after school, Chinese-heritage parents — unless they are recent immigrants — are no more authoritarian than their European American peers (Choi and others, 2013). The difference relates to values: "What priority do I put on academics?" "Is having a well-rounded child my main goal in life?" While the basic parenting rhythm (give love and rules) is universal, we compose our child-rearing melody to harmonize with our values in life.

Table 7.1 gives you a chance to step back and determine your own child-rearing melody. Now, let's target two forces that permit parents to act authoritatively in real life.

Parents become authoritative when they are comfortable with their ethnic identity. Again, a good example involves immigrants. First-generation Chinese parents who value their heritage and embrace being American act authoritatively and also are highly satisfied with life (Vu and others, 2019). Therefore, immigrant children's proficiency in both their language of origin and English predicts having authoritative parents and child well-being (Chung and others, 2019). (More about the emotional benefits of identifying with your ethnic roots in Chapters 9 and 10.)

Parents become authoritative in caring, trustworthy communities. Having a welcoming community matters. Does this nation embrace diversity (Telzer and others, 2016)? Will my new town accept my family, or am I moving to a hostile place (Bornstein, 2017; Pieloch, McCollough, & Marks, 2016)?

Actually, when children grow up in dangerous, inhospitable regions of the world, parents may be forced to adopt an authoritarian parenting style. As one mother in violence-wracked El Salvador anguished, "I do not let my son go outside. . . . I think we have become overprotective against our will" (quoted in Rojas-Flores and others, 2013, p. 278). Conversely, living in supportive multigenerational enclaves may partly explain why, despite being less affluent, on average, Hispanic Americans outlive Whites (see Chapters 1 and 14).

collective efficacy Communities defined by strong cohesion, a commitment to neighbor-to-neighbor helping, and shared prosocial values among residents.

One theme of this chapter is that parents (and children) thrive in communities high in **collective efficacy**, cohesive neighborhoods where adults bond together around shared prosocial norms. To paraphrase the African proverb: "It takes a village to raise successful children, and successful parents, too."

But, given that *where* children are raised matters greatly, how vital — really — are authoritative parents in determining how children turn out?

How Much Do Parents Matter?

The most inspiring place to begin is with iconic role models who endured adverse childhood experiences, but succeeded brilliantly as adults.

Examining Resilient Children

His aristocratic parents spent their time gallivanting around Europe; they rarely set foot in the nursery. At age 7, he was wrenched from the only person who loved him — his nanny — and shipped off to boarding school. Insolent, angry, refusing to obey orders or sit still, he was regularly beaten by the headmaster and teased by the other boys. Although gifted at writing, he was incapable of rote memorization; he couldn't pass a test. When he graduated at the bottom of his boarding-school class, his father informed him that he would never amount to anything. His name was Winston Churchill. He was the man who stood up to Hitler and carried England to victory in World War II.

Churchill's upbringing was a recipe for disaster. He had neglectful parents and behavior problems and was a failure at school. But this dismal childhood produced the leader who helped save the modern world.

resilient children Children who rebound from serious early life traumas to construct successful adult lives.

Resilient children, like Churchill or Abraham Lincoln (in the photo), confront terrible conditions such as parental abuse, poverty, and war and go on to construct incredibly successful, loving lives. What qualities allow these children to thrive?

Developmentalists find that resilient children often have a special talent, such as Churchill's writing gift or Lincoln's towering intellect. They are adept at regulating their emotions. They have an optimistic worldview (Grych, Hamby, & Banyard, 2015). They possess a strong faith or sense of meaning in life (Wright & Masten, 2005). Drawing on the research in Chapter 4, resilient children — like Churchill and Lincoln, who triumphed in the face of cataclysmic events (World War II and the American Civil War) — may be blessed with the genetically determined hormonal profile that makes them biologically resistant to breaking down under stress.

Being resilient depends, partially, on being hormonally blessed. The number of wider-world traumas matters, too (Panter-Brick and others, 2015). If you endure a series of tragedies — for instance, your parents getting divorced after you've experienced a disaster such as a hurricane — it's more difficult to preserve your emotional efficacy or rebound to construct a happy life (Becker-Blease, Turner, & Finkelhor, 2010; Kronenberg and others, 2010).

Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division [LC-USZ62-2280]

Abandoned by his father at age 9 and raised in a Kentucky shack without any chance to attend school, Abraham Lincoln grew up to become the most beloved U.S. president in history. What made this resilient child thrive? The answer: towering intellectual gifts, a remarkable drive to learn, optimism, self-efficacy, and a world-class talent for understanding human motivations and connecting with people in caring, prosocial ways.

Most important, children who succeed against incredible odds have at least one close, caring relationship with a parent or another adult (such as Churchill's nanny). Like a plant that thrives in the desert, resilient children have the biological resources to extract love from a parched environment. But they cannot live without any water at all. To fulfill our human potential, we need at least one secure attachment — be it to a parent, teacher, neighbor, or best friend.

Making the Case That Parents Don't Matter

What matters more in our development: our parents or our genes? Twin and adoption studies, as I mentioned in Chapter 1, come down firmly on the "it's mainly genetic" side. Faced with this nature-oriented behavioral-genetic research message, one developmentalist famously concluded that it doesn't matter if you were raised in your

John Davidson Photos/Alamy

Look at these exuberant boys, passionate to fit in with their friends. Then ask yourself whether these children are acting the same way they were taught to behave at home. Suddenly, doesn't Judith Harris's theory that "peer groups shape development" make sense?

particular family or the one down the street. Given adequate parenting, and a decent environment, children grow up to express their genetic fate (see Scarr, 1997; Scarr & Deater-Deckard, 1997).

Psychologist Judith Harris provided the most interesting twist on this "parents don't matter" argument. Harris (1995, 1998, 2002, 2006) argues that the environment has a dramatic impact on our development but that, rather than parents, our peer group socializes us to become adults.

Harris begins by taking aim at the basic principle underlying attachment theory — that the lessons we learn from our parents transfer to other relationships. Learning, Harris believes, is context-specific. We cannot use the same *working model* with our mother and the classroom bully or we would never survive. Furthermore, because we live our lives in the wider world, she argues, the messages we absorb from the culture of our contemporaries takes precedence over the lessons we are taught at home.

Any parent can relate to Harris's peer-power principle when witnessing a 2-year-old pick up every bad habit from his day-care classmates (see Chapter 4). I outlined chilling examples of a similar influence in Chapter 6 when I described how aggressive classroom norms promote bullying in even the "nicest kids."

These arguments about the importance of genetics and peer groups alert us to the fact that when we see children acting out, we cannot leap to the assumption that "it's the parents' fault." As developmental systems theory predicts, many influences — from friends, to schools, to neighborhoods, to living in trustworthy nations — affect how children behave. But you may be thinking that the idea that parents are *not* important goes too far.

Many experts agree. For children to realize their genetic potential, parents should provide the best possible environment (Ceci and others, 1997; Kagan, 1998; Maccoby, 2002). In fact, even in the most efficacious community, when children are biologically vulnerable, superior parenting is required.

Making the Case for Superior Parenting

Imagine, for instance, that your daughter is temperamentally "difficult." You know from reading this book that you may be tempted to disengage emotionally from your child. You understand that adopting this less responsive parenting style can make the situation worse. So you inhibit your use of *power assertion*. You provide lots of love. You arrange the environment to minimize your child's vulnerabilities and highlight her strengths.

Actually, when a child has biological vulnerabilities, sensitive caregiving can make a critical difference. From the studies mentioned in Chapter 3, showing that loving touch helps premature infants grow, to my suggestions for raising fearful or exuberant toddlers in Chapter 4, the message is the same: With "at-risk" children, outstanding parenting matters most.

So let's celebrate the fact that resilient children can flower in the face of difficult life conditions. But when a baby needs special nurturing, high-quality nurture is required.

Lessons for Readers Who Are (or Plan to Be) Parents

Now let's summarize this section's messages by offering concrete parenting advice.

Follow the universal good-parenting guidelines: Offer lots of love, set consistent rules, and respect your culture's priorities. But feel free to compose your own personal parenting melody by raising your children according to your unique values in life.

You will face special challenges being authoritative if you live in a hostile neighborhood or society, or have a child who is "harder to raise" (where you may have to work harder to stay loving and attached). Your power is limited, at best.

Try to see this message as liberating. Children cannot be massaged into having an ideal adult life. Your child's future does not totally depend on you. Focus on the quality of your relationship and enjoy these wonderful years. And if your son or daughter is having problems, draw inspiration from Winston Churchill's history. Predictions from childhood to adult life can be hazy. Your struggling child may grow up to save the world! ■

Developmental Psychology Videos

Family Structure and Function in Middle Childhood

In this video, you will review the different types of families and caregiving that exist today. Achieve

Now that I've covered the general territory, let's turn to specifics. First, I'll examine the controversy surrounding spanking and then focus on the worst type of parenting, child abuse. Finally, I'll explore that common family event, divorce.

Spanking

Poll friends and family about **corporal punishment** — physical discipline — and you are likely to get strong reactions. Some people adhere to the Biblical principle, "Spare the rod and spoil the child." They may blame the decline in spanking for every social problem. Others blame corporal punishment for *creating* social problems. They believe that parents who rely on hitting are implicitly teaching children that it is OK to respond in a violent way. To put these positions into perspective, let's take a tour of the total turnaround in corporal punishment attitudes in recent times.

corporal punishment The use of physical force to discipline a child.

Before the twentieth century, corporal punishment was standard. Flogging was routine in prisons (Gould & Pate, 2010), the military, and other places (Pinker, 2011). In the United States, it was legal for men to "physically chastise" their wives (Knox, 2010). Today, in Western democracies, these practices are universally condemned.

In fact, as of 2020, 60 nations — from Spain to Sweden, Croatia to Costa Rica — have laws banning child corporal punishment (Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children, 2020). Public health organizations regularly put forth resolutions that call spanking "inhumane" (Knox, 2010).

The United States is an exception. Although spanking is illegal at schools and day-care centers in most states, any U.S. legislator proposing a bill to completely ban this behavior might be severely condemned. Not only is our individualistic society wary about the government intruding into parental "freedom," but most U.S. parents do spank their children, especially during the toddler and preschool years (Gibson & Fagan, 2018).

Still, with surveys showing that only 1 in 10 parents admit they "often spank," corporal punishment is not the preferred U.S. discipline mode. The most frequent punishments parents report are removal of privileges and, to a lesser extent, getting sent to one's room (Barkin and others, 2007).

Who, in the United States, is most apt to spank? Corporal punishment is widely accepted in the African American community (Patton, 2017). As one Black woman reported, "I would rather me discipline them than [the police]" (quoted in Taylor, Hamvas, & Paris, 2011, p. 65). As you might imagine from the "spare the rod, spoil the child" injunction, conservative Christians are typically in favor of this disciplinary technique (Miller-Perrin & Perrin, 2017).

What do experts advise? Today, psychologists overwhelmingly believe spanking is *never* appropriate (Gershoff & Grogan-Kaylor, 2016). Hitting, they argue, models violence. Yes, spanking may produce immediate compliance. But it impairs prosocial behavior because it gets children to only focus on themselves (Andero & Stewart, 2002; Benjet & Kazdin, 2003; Knox, 2010).

A few developmentalists, such as Diana Baumrind, have a (slightly) different view (Baumrind, Larzelere, & Cowan, 2002). They argue that the "never-spank" data depend on correlations — and, as we know, due to an evocative process, parents

tend to use physical punishment when their children *already* act out (Larzelere and others, 2019). Moreover, if we rule out spanking, they believe, caregivers may resort to soul-destroying practices such as saying, "I hate you. You will never amount to anything." But even these skeptical psychologists have clear limits for when physical discipline should (and should not) be used:

- Never hit an infant. Babies can't control their behavior. They don't know what they are doing wrong. For a preschooler, a few light swats on the bottom can be a last-resort disciplinary technique if a child is engaging in dangerous activities — such as running into the street — that need to be immediately stopped (Larzelere and others, 2019).
- This action, however, must be accompanied by a verbal explanation ("What you did was wrong because . . ."). Spanking should only be considered if other approaches fail.

tomazl/E+/Getty Images

Although this father may think he is teaching his young child to behave, using corporal punishment might instead train him to be the class bully in third grade.

The issue is that, with more than 100 studies that correlate corporal punishment with later mental health problems (see Gershoff, Sattler, & Ansari, 2018), we need to dispel the misconception that spanking produces well-disciplined, obedient children. Because spanking rates explode in disorganized, dangerous neighborhoods (Ma, Grogan-Kaylor, & Lee, 2020), we need to make communities more caring (Ma, 2016).

Changing attitudes is also important. If most adults in your neighborhood (or social group) believe spanking is fine, even in efficacious communities, every parent tends to get infected, COVID-like, with this contagious mental disease (see Fleckman and others, 2019).

The problem is that spanking *promotes* the behavior it is supposed to cure. Hitting toddlers predicts high rates of elementary school bullying, especially in boys (Turns & Sibley, 2018). Worse yet, what starts out as "normal" spanking can escalate as a parent gets more aggravated, which means the child cries more, the hitting intensifies, and soon we have that worst-case scenario: child abuse.

Child Abuse

child maltreatment Any act that seriously endangers a child's physical or emotional well-being.

Child maltreatment — actions that endanger children's physical or emotional well-being — comprise four categories. *Physical abuse* refers to bodily injury that leaves bruises. It encompasses everything from overzealous spanking to battering that may lead to a child's death. *Neglect* refers to caregivers' failure to provide adequate supervision and care. It might mean abandoning the child, not providing sufficient food, or failing to enroll a son or daughter in school. *Emotional abuse* refers to shaming, terrorizing, or exploiting a child. *Sexual abuse* covers the spectrum from rape and incest to fondling and exhibitionistic acts.

Everyone can identify serious forms of maltreatment, but there is a gray area as to what activities cross the line (Liu & Vaughn, 2019). Does every spanking that leaves bruises qualify as physical abuse? If a mother leaves her toddler in an 8-year-old sibling's care, is she neglectful? Are parents who walk around naked guilty of sexual abuse? Emotional abuse is inherently murky to define, although this form of maltreatment may be the most common of all (Foster and others, 2010).

This definitional issue partly explains why maltreatment statistics vary, depending on who we ask. In one global summary, scientists estimated that roughly 3 of

1,000 children worldwide were physically maltreated, using informants' (that is, other people's) reports. In polling adults, the rates are far higher. In one study in Canada, a shocking 1 in 4 people reported being maltreated as a child (MacMillan and others, 2013).

Obviously, more people will report that they were abused than "objective" abuse-rate figures indicate (Bifulco & Schimmenti, 2019). But, although some adults may err on the side of saying "I was abused" because they are angry with their parents, reports to authorities probably qualify as the iceberg's tiny tip. Why is maltreatment often swept under the rug? Before answering this question, let's look at what provokes this parenting pathology and probe its effects.

Exploring the Risk Factors

As developmental systems theory predicts, several categories of influence can spark child abuse.

Parents' Personality Problems Are Important People who maltreat their children tend to suffer from psychological disorders such as depression. They may have *hostile attributional biases* (McCarthy & Lumley, 2012), assuming that a toddler is "bad" when she engages in benign activities like running around.

Life Stress Accompanied by Social Isolation Can Be Crucial Abusive parents are often young and poorly educated (Cicchetti, 2016). They tend to be coping with an overload of life stressors, such as poverty and domestic violence (Martinez-Torteya and others, 2020). They feel cut off from caring social contacts. Again, feeling isolated in neighborhoods low in collective efficacy can be the match that causes child abuse to flare up (Martinez-Torteya and others, 2020; Prendergast & MacPhee, 2020).

Children's Vulnerabilities Play a Role A child who is emotionally fragile can fan this fire — a baby who cries excessively (Reijneveld and others, 2004), has a medical problem (Svensson, Bornehag, & Janson, 2011), or is premature (Sieswerda-Hoogendoorn and others, 2013). Therefore, in a terrible irony, the very children that most need loving care are apt to provoke an out-of-control caregiver's wrath. The fact that abusive parents may target just one child was brought home to me when I was working as a clinical psychologist at a city hospital in New York. A mother was referred for treatment for abusing her "spiteful" 10-year-old, although she never harmed his "sweet" 3-year-old brother. So disturbances in the attachment relationship are a core ingredient in the poisonous recipe producing a battered child.

Exploring the Consequences

Because traumatic childhood experiences prime the body to *epigenetically* break down (Kirsch, Nemeroff, & Lippard, 2020), maltreated children are prone to develop premature heart disease (Bakema and others, 2020). They are vulnerable to becoming suicidal or seriously depressed (Humphreys and others, 2020; Lippard & Nemeroff, 2020). Just as with the orphanage-reared babies discussed in Chapter 4, child maltreatment may compromise the developing brain (Murthy and others, 2020).

The social consequences can be severe. Maltreated children, especially boys and girls who are emotionally abused, have poor peer relationships (Yoon and others, 2020). They have elevated rates of antisocial behaviors throughout life (Degli Esposti and others, 2020). They are vulnerable to getting embroiled in abusive love relationships (River and others, 2019); and yes, they are at higher risk of maltreating their own daughters and sons.

Still, most abused children become decent, caring parents. Some are passionate to go in the opposite direction (Berlin, Appleyard, & Dodge, 2011). As one woman described, "I made a vow to protect my children. . . . It was almost like a mantra, that I'm never going to strike [my child]" (quoted in Hall, 2011, p. 38).

A loving family life—and particularly, a caring relationship with a spouse—can break the intergenerational cycle of abuse.

LWA/Dann Tardif/Getty Images

Adults who break the cycle of abuse tend to have good intellectual and coping skills (Hengartner and others, 2013). They may be born with the kind of resilient hormonal profile that makes them more resistant to stress (Banducci and others, 2014). Having a loving marriage also offers potent insulation from repeating the trauma of abuse (Jaffee and others, 2013).

Taking Action Against Child Abuse

What should you do if you suspect child abuse? Many states require teachers, social workers, and health-care professionals to report the situation to child protective services (Liu & Vaughn, 2019). Children in imminent danger are removed from the home and the cases are referred to juvenile court. Judges do not have the power to punish abusive parents, but they can place children in foster care and terminate parental rights.

The problem is that, because the criteria defining abuse are murky, even trained professionals are reluctant to intervene (Liu & Vaughn, 2019). As one social worker anguished, "We don't like to blame; we don't like to point fingers. We don't like to judge." And then she continued, "The only thing that would make this easier is if . . . the person . . . would say, 'Listen, I beat my child'" (Sigad and others, 2019, p. 209).

And, as the following vignette study shows, we have powerful temptations not to report the situation to child protective services or the police. Researchers randomly assigned adults to two scenarios: They were told to imagine that they witnessed child abuse either in their own community or in an unfamiliar neighborhood. Then they were asked how they would respond. To the researchers' surprise, if the abuse happened outside of their neighborhood, people were *more* likely to say they would alert the authorities (Wolf, Baiocchi, & Argüello, 2018).

But, based on my ethics of prosocial behavior discussion in Chapter 6, this counterintuitive result makes sense. We naturally feel loyal to our own group. So it might be especially hard to inform on a family member, neighbor, or colleague, even if that person clearly is harming a child.

Table 7.2: Making Sense of Bystander Behavior in the Face of Abuse: Some Possible Thoughts

1. I might be wrong, and, if so, I'll ruin the person's life.
2. I have ethical issues with betraying my neighbor or friend.
3. My neighbor or friend might retaliate against me if they know I gave the report.
4. The authorities won't act even if I make a complaint.
5. If the authorities *do* act, removing this child from the family might do everyone more harm.

Can you think of other reasons why abuse might be swept under the rug?

Table 7.2 attempts to get inside people's heads as they contemplate this difficult choice, spelling out why I believe normally conscientious people decide not to intervene. If you were worried that a neighbor or relative might be maltreating a child, what would you do? ■

Although it still occurs too often, child abuse is no longer common today (see Pinker, 2011). However, since the late-twentieth-century lifestyle revolution, children are more apt to face another unwelcome family change: divorce. How does divorce affect children, and what can adults do to help?

Divorce

Let's start with the bad news. Studies worldwide comparing children of divorced parents with their counterparts in intact, married families show these boys and girls are at a disadvantage — academically, socially, and in terms of mental health (Lamela and others, 2016). One reason may be economic. Divorce can propel a mother-headed household into poverty, even though that family had previously been middle class (Raley & Sweeney, 2020; see also Figure 7.1b).

The good news is that children usually adjust to this life transition well, as long as the divorce is fairly conflict-free (Weaver & Schofield, 2015). The real issue is the number of additional transitions in a child's life (Raley & Sweeney, 2020). It's one thing to suffer the pain of seeing a beloved parent leave home, but suppose you then faced a parade of new fathers or mothers, and moved to several new schools. Even the most resilient boy or girl might break down.

Therefore, to protect children, it's best to minimize the number of life changes that accompany divorce. And, above all, parents should put aside their vengeful feelings and *not* bad-mouth a former spouse.

But, unfortunately, **parental alienation** — poisoning children against ex-partners — is far from rare. Even years after separating, some people can't resist demonizing the other parent, especially after an acrimonious divorce (see van Lawick & Visser, 2015). Backbiting, as you might expect, can have poisonous effects on a child:

parental alienation When divorced parents bad-mouth a former spouse, with the goal of turning a child against that person.

> "I mean, if they really cared, they would stop acting crazy all the time," a teenager named Dwayne told his therapist. . . . "I tell them I don't want to hear. (But) it doesn't matter. . . ." And then he continued, "I hate being the monkey in the middle!" And the therapist replied, "When does the monkey get a break?" Dwayne answered, "I guess when I'm with my friends or sketching."
>
> (Shumaker & Kelsey, 2020, p. 33)

This sensitive therapist knew that the key to helping his client cope was to encourage Dwayne to disengage from the turmoil at home and focus on what gave him pleasure. And as the study in Figure 7.4 summarizes, when children

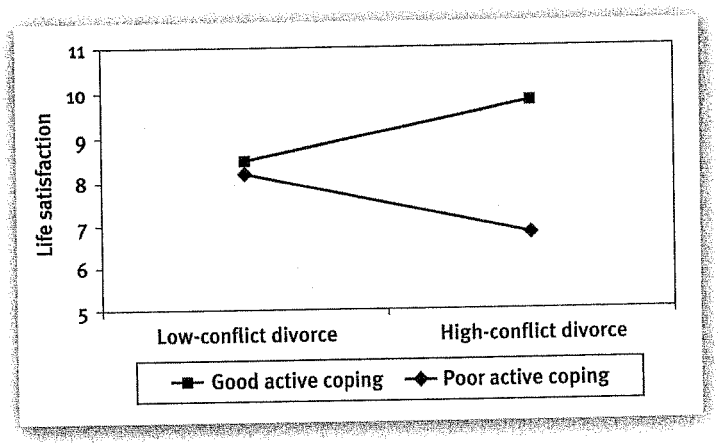


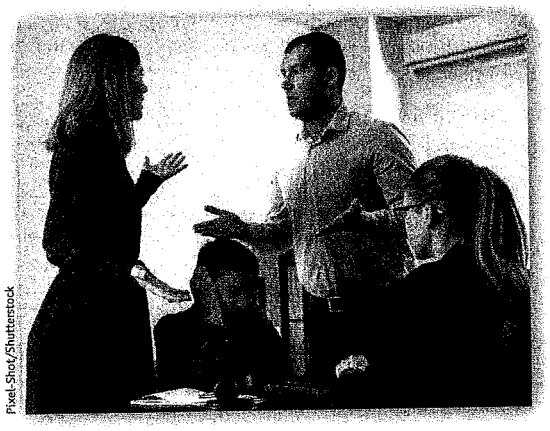
Figure 7.4: Life satisfaction of children who did and did not cope actively when their parents divorced
In this study of Israeli pre-teens whose parents divorced, notice that every child coped well provided the divorce was harmonious. But if the divorce was "high-conflict," life satisfaction deteriorated dramatically, unless children could say, "When my parents fight, I do something to make myself feel better about my life."
Information from Sorek, 2019

adopt this efficacious strategy, being caught between battling parents won't take such a toll on well-being.

When caregivers continually bicker, and so make children "monkeys in the middle," **joint custody** — the ideal practice of giving both parents free access to sons and daughters — is not appropriate. Should children be able to decide which custody arrangement they prefer? One study, comparing standard divorce mediation with approaches centered more on the children's wishes, suggested yes (Ballard and others, 2013).

joint custody The currently preferred legal arrangement of having divorced spouses share child-rearing fifty-fifty, or each parent having full access to seeing their children after a divorce.

Still, in another poll of divorced parents and teens, everyone recoiled at the idea of putting *total* decision making on a child (Cashmore & Parkinson, 2008). Imagine forcing a son or daughter to admit, "I prefer to live with Mom (or Dad)." And consider the coercion that might ensue from the parents' side. During one semester's divorce discussion, a student of mine poignantly described this scenario when she informed the class, "My daughter told the judge she wanted to live with her father, and then, years later said, 'Mom, I wanted to stay with you, but I was afraid to say so because I was frightened of Dad.'"


Pixel-Shot/Shutterstock

Do you think a child should be testifying about whether to live with Mom or Dad? Clearly, there are serious minuses here.

After a divorce, it's normal for child-rearing to get less authoritative, as parents struggle with their upsetting feelings. Still, what matters most is each partner's ongoing parenting style. Who will be the most authoritative caregiver? Children should spend the most time with the parent (or parents) who parent the best (Weaver & Schofield, 2015).

Table 7.3 summarizes these points in a "Will a child cope well with divorce?" questionnaire. Now, let's turn to that other setting within which children develop — school.

Table 7.3: Will a Child Cope Well with Divorce? Five Section Summary Questions

1. Has this child undergone many subsequent life transitions? (The more life changes that occur during the next years, the higher the risk of emotional problems.)
2. Do the ex-spouses continually bad-mouth each other? (Parental alienation after divorce is poisonous.)
3. Does this boy or girl have compelling interests? (Efficaciously drawing on other sources for self-esteem is essential, particularly in high-conflict divorces.)
4. Will this child have input in custody decisions? (This can be positive, as long as the total decision-making burden doesn't fall on the child.)
5. After the divorce, will the child's primary caregiver be warm and set consistent rules? (Authoritative post-divorce child-rearing is the main force that predicts how children cope!)

Tying It All Together

1. Montana's parents set firm rules, but value their children's input about family decisions. Pablo's parents have rules for everything and tolerate no *ifs*, *ands*, or *buts*. Shirin's parents don't really have rules — at their house, it's always playtime. Which parenting style is being used by Montana's parents? By Pablo's parents? By Shirin's parents?
2. A close friend is an immigrant from Pakistan. Pick which force does *not* predict that this mother and her child are adjusting well to their new life.
   a. This friend's child is bilingual.
   b. This friend is an authoritative parent.
   c. This friend has rejected her heritage to become a "true American."
3. Melissa's son Memo, now in elementary school, was born prematurely and has a difficult temperament. What might Judith Harris advise about fostering Memo's development, and what might this chapter recommend?
4. Your sister is concerned about a friend who uses corporal punishment with her baby and her 4-year-old. She asks what the experts say. Pick which *two* statements developmentalists might make.
   a. Never spank children of any age.
   b. Mild spanking is OK for the infant.
   c. Corporal punishment is linked to mental health problems.
   d. If the child has a difficult temperament, corporal punishment might help.
5. Ms. Ramirez is worried about a neighbor's child, who roams the street at all hours of the night. Yesterday, she saw burn marks on the child's arms. Describe how Ms. Ramirez might feel about reporting this suspected neglect and abuse.
6. Imagine you are a family court judge deciding to award joint custody. What is the main question you would ask the parents?

Answers to the Tying It All Together questions can be found at the end of this chapter.

SOMETHING TO CONSIDER: Settings for Development: Home and School: Evaluating Parenting Styles Achieve

School

Learning Outcomes

- Describe the WISC and how psychologists use this test.
- Explore the controversial meaning of IQ.
- Contrast Sternberg's and Gardner's ideas.
- Describe successful schools.
- Outline intrinsic motivation and the three determinants of ideal teaching.
- Explain which types of neighborhoods promote upward mobility.

What was the test that José (in the chapter-opening vignette) took, and what does intelligence really mean? What makes for good teaching and superior schools? Before tackling these school-related topics, let's step back and, again, explore the impact of that basic marker — poverty — on young children's cognitive skills.

Unequal at the Starting Gate

Chapter 4 described the oversized negative impact early-childhood poverty has on high school success. Figure 7.5 reveals that devastation by offering sobering statistics relating to poor children's disadvantages at the beginning of kindergarten. Notice that, while middle-class and affluent children typically score above the cutoff on school readiness tests, for boys and girls living in poverty, the percentage shrinks to less than 1 in 2 (Duncan, Magnuson, & Votruba-Drzal, 2017).

You would think that when children start a race miles behind, they would get special help to catch up. The reality is the reverse. From class size to the quality of teacher training, U.S. kindergartens serving impoverished children rank at the bottom of the educational heap.

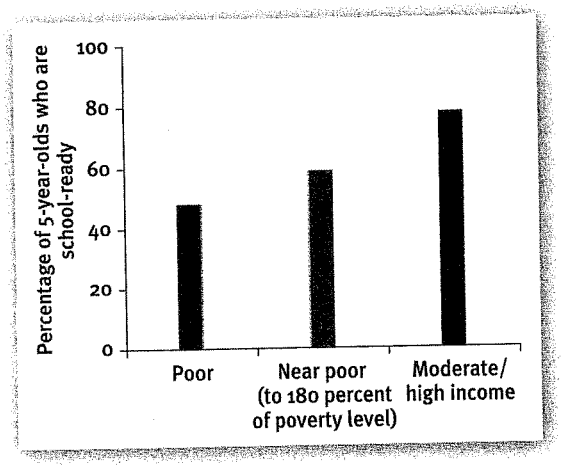


Figure 7.5: Percentage of U.S. 5-year-olds ready for school, by socioeconomic status This chart shows the dramatic impact of family income on school readiness. According to national U.S. tests, less than half of all young children living in poverty score as being "able to do kindergarten work."

Data from Isaacs, 2012, p. 3

Let's keep these mammoth educational disparities in mind as we explore the controversial topic of intelligence tests.

Intelligence and IQ Tests

What does it mean to be intelligent? Ask people on the street this question, and they probably mention both academic and "real-life" skills (Sternberg, 2007; Sternberg, Grigorenko, & Kidd, 2005).

Traditional intelligence tests — called **intelligence quotient (IQ)** tests — measure *only* academic abilities. These tests differ from **achievement tests**, the yearly evaluations children take to measure knowledge in various subjects. IQ tests are designed to predict academic *potential*, or a child's ability to master any school-related task. Do the tests measure mainly genetic capacities and have any relevance beyond school? To approach these hot-button issues, let's examine the intelligence test that children typically take today, the WISC.

intelligence quotient (IQ) Measures evaluating a child's overall cognitive ability, or general aptitude for mastering academic work.

achievement tests Measures evaluating a child's knowledge in specific school-related areas.

WISC (Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children) The standard intelligence test used in childhood, consisting of different subtests.

Examining the WISC

The **WISC (Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children)**, now in its fifth revision, was devised by psychologist David Wechsler and is the current standard intelligence test. As you can see in Table 7.4, the WISC samples a child's performance in five basic areas. This means that, in addition to giving the child a single overall score, testers look in a more detailed way at particular skills (see Cormier, Kennedy, & Aquilina, 2016).

Achievement tests are given to groups. The WISC is administered individually by a trained psychologist in about an hour of testing and concludes with a written report. If a child scores at the 50th percentile for his age group, his IQ is defined as 100. If that child's IQ is 130, he ranks at roughly the 98th percentile, or in the top 2 percent of children his age. If a child's score is 70, he is at the opposite end of the distribution, performing in the lowest 2 percent of children that age. This score distribution, as Figure 7.6 shows, looks like a bell-shaped curve.

When do children take this test? The answer, most often, is during elementary school when there is a question about a child's classroom performance. School personnel then use the IQ score as one component of a multifaceted assessment — which

Table 7.4: The WISC-5: A Subtest Sampler

Subtest	Sample (Simulated) Item
	Verbal Comprehension Index
Similarities (analogies)	Cat is to kitten as dog is to _____.
Vocabulary (defining words)	What is a table?
	Fluid Reasoning Index
Picture completion	Pick out what is missing in this picture.
	Visual Spatial Index
Block design	Arrange these blocks to look like the photograph on the card within a time limit.
	Processing Speed Index
Coding	Using the key above, put each symbol in the correct space below.
	Working Memory Index
Digit span	Repeat these numbers forward. Now repeat these numbers backward.

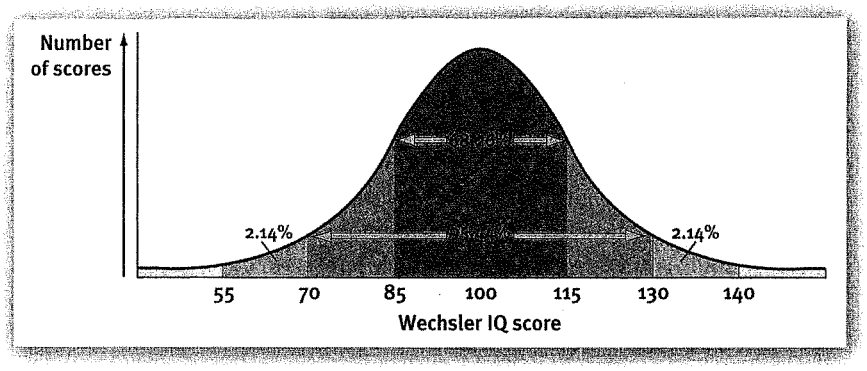


Figure 7.6: The Classic Bell Curve Distribution As you can see, more than 2 out of 3 test takers have WISC scores clustering within 15 points of 100 (the 50th percentile). At an IQ of 130 or above, children score as "gifted" because they performed at about the top 2 percent of all test takers that age.

includes achievement test scores, teachers' ratings, and parents' input — to determine whether a boy or girl needs special help (Sattler, 2001). If a child's low score (below 70) and other behaviors warrant this designation, she may be classified as **intellectually disabled**. If a child's IQ is far higher than would be expected, compared to her performance on achievement tests, she is classified with a **specific learning disorder**, an umbrella term for any language-related difficulty such as problems focusing on written material (as in ADHD), thinking, speaking, reading, spelling, or math.

Although children with learning disabilities often score in the average range on IQ tests, they have trouble with schoolwork. Many times, they have a debilitating impairment called **dyslexia** that undercuts every academic skill. Dyslexia, a catchall term that refers to any reading disorder, may have multiple causes (see Table 7.5). What's important is that, despite having good instruction and doing well on tests of intelligence, a dyslexic child is still struggling to read (Shaywitz, Morris, & Shaywitz, 2008).

intellectual disability The label for significantly impaired cognitive functioning, measured by deficits in behavior accompanied by an IQ of 70 or below.

specific learning disorder The label for difficulties related to language, listening, thinking, speaking, reading, writing, spelling, or understanding mathematics.

dyslexia A learning disorder characterized by reading difficulties, lack of fluency, and poor word recognition that is often genetic in origin.

Table 7.5: Some Interesting Facts About Dyslexia

- Reading difficulties are shockingly prevalent among U.S. children. According to one survey, more than 1 in 4 high school seniors were reading below the most basic levels. The figures were higher for fourth graders — over 1 in 3 had trouble grasping the basic points of a passage designed for their grade.
- Specific learning disabilities (including dyslexia) are a mainly male diagnosis, affecting roughly 3 times as many boys as girls worldwide.
- Dyslexia is inherited, and seems to involve several possible genetic variants.
- Late-appearing language (entering the word-combining phase of speech at an older-than-typical age, such as close to age 2½ [see Chapter 3]) and letter-naming and phonemic difficulties (the inability to differentiate sounds [see Chapter 5]) are early predictors of dyslexia.
- Dyslexia can be diagnosed in preschool by combining behavioral tests with brain scans. Reduced gray matter surface area in the brain regions responsible for reading predict a subsequent diagnosis.
- Although many dyslexic children eventually learn to read, this condition persists to some extent into adulthood. Early interventions — involving intensive instruction in teaching at-risk kindergartners and first graders to identify phonemes — can be effective, but special help may be needed throughout elementary school.
- Children with dyslexia perform more poorly on tests of executive functions. They develop theory of mind skills at a later age. About 30 percent are diagnosed with ADHD. Still, dyslexic children can become remarkably successful adults. Celebrities with dyslexia include actress Octavia Spencer, tech pioneer Steve Jobs, and Olympic medalist Caitlyn Jenner.

Information from Alenzo and others, 2020; Beelan and others, 2010; Benevenuti and others, 2010; Gough, Snowling, & Hulme, 2011; Henry, Messer, & Nash, 2012; Hensler and others, 2010; Kraft and others, 2016; Landerl & Moll, 2010; Leppanen and others, 2010; Panicker & Chellam, 2016; Shao and others, 2016; Shaywitz and others, 2008.

gifted The label for superior intellectual functioning characterized by an IQ score of 130 or above, showing that a child ranks in the top 2 percent of his age group.

Developmental Psychology Videos

Adolescent Discusses Impact of Dyslexia

In this video, a teen with dyslexia will guide you through day-to-day life with this condition. Achieve

My son, for instance, has dyslexia, and our experience shows just how important having a measure of general intelligence can be. Because Thomas was falling behind in the third grade, my husband and I arranged to have our son tested. Thomas was defined as having a learning disability because his IQ score was above average, but his achievement scores were well below the norm for his grade. Although we were aware of our son's reading problems, the testing was vital in easing our anxieties. Thomas — as we thought — was capable intellectually. Now we just had to get our son through school with his sense of self-efficacy intact!

Often, teachers and parents urge testing for a happier reason: They want to confirm that a child is intellectually advanced. If the child's IQ exceeds a certain number (typically 130), she is labeled as **gifted** (see Figure 7.6) and is eligible for special programs. In U.S. public schools, the law mandates intelligence testing before children can be assigned to a gifted program or remedial class (Canter, 1997; Sattler, 2001).

Table 7.5 offered a fact sheet about dyslexia. The Experiencing the Lifespan box provides a firsthand view of what it is like to triumph over this debilitating condition. Now that we have explored the measure and when it is used, let's turn to what the scores mean.

Experiencing the Lifespan From Dyslexic Child to a Career Helping Dyslexic Children

Aimee Holt, a colleague who teaches our school's psychology students, is beautiful and intelligent, the kind of golden girl you imagine would be a great childhood success. When I sat down to chat with Aimee about her struggles with learning disabilities, I found first impressions can be misleading.

In first grade, the teachers said I was mentally retarded. I didn't notice the sounds that went along with letters. I walked into walls and fell down a lot. My parents refused to put me in a special school and finally got me accepted at a private school, contingent on getting a good deal of help. I spent my elementary school years being tutored for an hour before school, an hour afterwards, and all summer.

Socially, elementary school was a nightmare. . . . I remember kids laughing at me, calling me stupid. I had a small group of friends, but we were all misfits. One of my closest friends had an inoperable brain tumor. Because of my problems coordinating vision with motor skills, I couldn't participate in normal activities, like sports or dance. By seventh grade, after years of working every day with my wonderful reading teacher, I was reading at almost the sixth-grade level.

Then, when we moved to Tennessee in freshman year of high school, I felt like a new person. Nobody knew I had learning difficulties. We moved to a rural community, so I was a top student, because I'd had the same classes in my Dallas private school the year before. In the tenth and eleventh grades, I was making As and Bs. I got a scholarship to college, where I was a straight-A student (with a GPA of 3.9).

My mom is the reason I've done well. She always believed in me, always felt I could make it; she never gave up. Plus, as I mentioned, I had an exceptional reading teacher. My goal was always to be an elementary school teacher, but, after teaching for years and realizing that a lot of the kids in my classes were not being accurately diagnosed, I decided to go to graduate school to get my Ph.D.

Today, in addition to teaching, I do private tutoring with children like me. First, I get kids to identify word sounds (phonemes) because children with dyslexia have a problem decoding specific word sounds. . . . "Which sounds rhyme, which don't?" . . . "If I change the word from cat to hat, what sound changes?" Most children naturally pick up on these reading cues. Kids with dyslexia need to have these skills directly taught.

Many children I tutor are in fourth or sixth grade and have had years of feeling like failures. Their attitude is "Why try? I'm going to fail anyway." I tell them that I've been there and that they can succeed. So I work on academic self-efficacy — teaching them to put forth effort. Most of these kids are intelligent, but as they progress through school, their IQ drops because they are not exposed to written material at their grade level. I try to get them to stay in the regular classroom, with modifications such as books on tape and oral testing, to prevent that false drop in their knowledge base. I was so fortunate — with a wonderful mother, an exceptional reading teacher, getting the help I needed at the right time — so I feel my mission is to give something back.

Decoding the Meaning of the IQ Test

The first question we need to grapple with in looking at the meaning of the test relates to a measurement criterion called **reliability**. When people take a test that is thought to measure a basic trait (such as IQ) more than once, their results should not vary. Imagine that your IQ score randomly shifted from gifted to average, year by year. Clearly, this test score would not tell us anything about a stable attribute called intelligence.

reliability In measurement terminology, a basic criterion for a test's accuracy, meaning scores must be fairly similar when a person takes the same test more than once.

The good news is that, by elementary school, IQ test performance does typically remain stable (Ryan, Glass, & Bartels, 2010). Still, among individual children, the IQ can change. Scores are most likely to shift when children have undergone life stresses.

This research tells us that we should never evaluate a child's IQ during a family crisis such as divorce. But being reliable is only the first requirement. The test must be **valid**. It must predict what it is supposed to be measuring. Is the WISC a valid test?

validity In measurement terminology, a basic criterion for a test's accuracy, meaning that the measure reflects the real-world quality it is supposed to measure.

If our predictor is academic performance, the answer is yes. A child who gets an IQ score of 130 will tend to perform well in the gifted class. A child whose IQ is 80 will probably need remedial help. But now we turn to these controversial questions: Does the test measure genetic learning potential? Can it predict real-world success?

Are the Tests a Good Measure of Genetic Gifts? When evaluating children living in poverty (or boys and girls growing up in non–English-speaking families), logic tells us that the answer is *definitely* no. Look back at the items on the WISC verbal comprehension scale (Table 7.4), and you will immediately see that if parents stimulate their children's vocabulary, they are at a test-taking advantage. If, as I documented in Chapter 4, a family doesn't have the funds to give preschoolers a wealth of enriching experiences, children will be at a disadvantage on the test.

Evidence that the environment weighs heavily in IQ comes from the fact that, over the past century, IQ test scores have risen dramatically around the world (see Chapter 1) — a phenomenon called the **Flynn effect** (named for its discoverer James Flynn). More years of education have made twenty-first-century children and adults better abstract thinkers than their parents and grandparents were at the same age (Must, Must, & Mikk, 2016). Incredibly, Flynn (2007) calculates that the average-scoring child taking the WISC in 1900 would rank as "mentally deficient" using today's IQ norms!

Flynn effect Remarkable rise in IQ test scores around the world that occurred over the twentieth century.

We now have research showing that being poor *itself* artificially depresses test scores. For low-income children, the IQ score mainly reflects environmental forces. For upper-middle-class children, the test score reflects genetic gifts (Turkheimer and others, 2003). So if an elementary schooler comes from a poverty-level family and attends a low-quality school, then, yes, his IQ predicts his current school performance. But that number can't reflect *true* intellectual potential unless the child has been exposed to the incredible learning advantages upper-middle-class life provides.

Now, imagine that you are an upper-middle-class child. You were regularly read to, visited museums, and attended the best schools. Your IQ score is only 95 or 100. Is your intellectual potential limited for life?

Do IQ Scores Predict Real-World Performance? One student who approached me after this lecture and proudly admitted that his IQ was 140 was not thinking of school learning. He assumed that his score measured a basic "smartness" that carried over to every life activity. In measurement terminology, this student would agree with Charles Spearman. Spearman believed that IQ test scores reflect a general underlying, all-encompassing intelligence factor called **g**.

g Charles Spearman's term for a general intelligence factor that he believed underlies all cognitive activities.

Psychologists debate the existence of g. Many strongly believe that the IQ test *generally* predicts intellectual capacities. They argue that we can use the IQ as a summary measure of a person's cognitive potential for all life tasks (Herrnstein & Murray, 1994; Rushton & Jensen, 2005). Others believe that people have unique intellectual talents. There is no one-dimensional quality called g (Sternberg, 2007). These critics believe it is inappropriate to rank people on a continuum from highly intelligent to not very smart (Gould, 1981; Sternberg, Grigorenko, & Kidd, 2005).

Tantalizing evidence in favor of g lies in the fact that people differ in the speed with which they process information (Brody, 2006; Rushton & Jensen, 2005). Intelligence test scores also correlate with other indicators of life success, such as occupational status. However, the problem is that the gateway to high-status professions, such as law and medicine, is school performance, which is what the tests predict (Sternberg, 1997; Sternberg, Grigorenko, & Bundy, 2001).

One problem with believing that IQ tests offer a *total* X-ray into intellectual capacities is that people may carry around their test-score ranking as an inner wound. A psychologist supervisor once confessed to me that he was really not that intelligent because his IQ was only 105. He devalued the criterion his IQ was supposed to predict — years of real-life success — by accepting what, in his case, was an invalid score!

A high test score can produce its own problems. Suppose the student who told me his IQ was 140 decided he was so intelligent he didn't have to open a book in class. He might be in for a nasty surprise when he found out what *really* matters is hard work. Or that student might worry, "I'd better not try in Dr. Belsky's class because, if I do put forth effort and don't get an A, I will discover that my astronomical IQ score was wrong." (As I suggested in Chapter 6, this type of interpretation isn't rare; some research suggests telling elementary schoolers they "are basically smart" makes them afraid to tackle challenging academic tasks.)

Even the firmest advocate of g would admit that people have specific intellectual talents. Some of us are marvelous mechanically yet miserable at math, wonderful socially but hopeless at taking tests.

Toward a Broader View of Intelligence

Because real-world intelligence involves such different abilities, perhaps we should go beyond the skills the IQ test measures and explore those talents in a truly broad way. Psychologists Robert Sternberg and Howard Gardner offer this broader view of what it means to be smart.

Sternberg's Successful Intelligence Robert Sternberg (1984, 1996, 1997) has been a man on a mission. In hundreds of publications, this psychologist transformed the way we think about intelligence. Sternberg's passion comes from the heart. He began school with a problem himself:

> As an elementary school student, I failed miserably on the IQ tests. . . . My teachers . . . didn't expect much from me. . . . So I gave them what they expected. . . . Were the teachers disappointed? Not on your life. They were happy that I was giving them what they expected.
>
> (Sternberg, 1997, pp. 17–18)

analytic intelligence In Robert Sternberg's framework on successful intelligence, the facet of intelligence involved in performing well on academic problems.

creative intelligence In Robert Sternberg's framework on successful intelligence, the facet of intelligence involved in producing novel ideas or innovative work.

practical intelligence In Robert Sternberg's framework on successful intelligence, the facet of intelligence involved in knowing how to act competently in real-world situations.

Sternberg believes that traditional intelligence tests do damage in school. As I implied earlier, the relationship between IQ scores and schooling is bidirectional. Children who attend inferior schools or who miss months of classroom work due to illness perform more poorly on intelligence tests (Sternberg, 1997). Worse yet, Sternberg argues, when schools assign children to lower-track, less demanding classes based on their low test scores, students' IQs gradually decline year by year.

Most important, Sternberg (1984) believes that conventional intelligence tests are too limited. Although they do measure one type of intelligence, they do not cover the total terrain.

IQ tests, according to Sternberg, measure **analytic intelligence**. They test how well people can solve academic problems. They do not measure **creative intelligence**, the ability to "think outside the box" or to formulate problems in new ways. Nor do they measure a third type of intelligence called **practical intelligence**, common sense, or "street smarts."

Being a math whiz (*analytic intelligence*) demands different skills from deftly snagging this fish (*practical intelligence*). That's why Robert Sternberg believes that IQ tests, which mainly measure school-type analytic skills, do not tap into many of the abilities that make people successful in the real world.

Brazilian street children who make their living selling flowers show impressive levels of practical intelligence. They understand how to handle money in the real world. However, they do very poorly on measures of traditional IQ (Sternberg, 1984, 1997). Others, such as Winston Churchill, can be terrible scholars but flower after they leave their academic careers. Then there are people who excel at IQ test taking and traditional schooling but fail abysmally in life. Sternberg argues that to be **successfully intelligent** in life requires a balance of all three types of intelligence. (As a postscript, Sternberg later added a fourth type of intellectual gift — the rare attribute called *wisdom* that I will discuss in Chapter 12.)

successful intelligence In Robert Sternberg's framework, the optimal form of cognition, which involves striking the right balance of analytic, creative, and practical intelligence.

Gardner's Multiple Intelligences Howard Gardner (1998) did not have Sternberg's problem with intelligence tests:

> As a child, I was a good student . . . but . . . music . . . and the arts were important [to me]. . . . Therefore, when I asked myself what optimal human development is, I became convinced that [we] had to . . . broaden the definition of intelligence. . . .
>
> (Gardner, 1998, p. 3)

multiple intelligences theory In Howard Gardner's perspective on intelligence, the principle that there are eight separate kinds of intelligence — verbal, mathematical, interpersonal, intrapersonal, spatial, musical, kinesthetic, and naturalist — plus a possible ninth type called spiritual intelligence.

Gardner is not passionately opposed to standard intelligence tests. Still, he believes that using the single IQ score is less informative than measuring children's unique gifts. (Gardner's motto is: "Ask not how *intelligent* you are, but *how* you are intelligent.") According to his **multiple intelligences theory**, human abilities come in eight, and possibly nine, distinctive forms (Gardner, 2004; Gardner & Moran, 2006).

In addition to the verbal and mathematical skills measured by traditional IQ tests, people may be gifted in *interpersonal intelligence*, understanding other people. Their talents may lie in *intrapersonal intelligence*, the skill of understanding oneself. They may be gifted in *spatial intelligence*, grasping where objects are arranged in space. (You might rely on a friend who is gifted in spatial intelligence to beautifully arrange the furniture in your house.) Some people have high levels of *musical intelligence*, *kinesthetic intelligence* (the ability to use the body well), or *naturalist intelligence* (a gift for dealing with animals or plants and trees). There may even be an *existential (spiritual) intelligence*, too.

Being a world-class gymnast (*kinesthetic intelligence*) doesn't necessarily mean that you will shine in reading or math. That's why Howard Gardner believes that schools need to broaden their focus to teach to the different kinds of intelligences that we all possess.

Evaluating the Theories These perspectives on intelligence are exciting. Some readers may be thinking, "I'm gifted in practical or musical intelligence. I knew there was more to being smart than school success!" But let's use our practical intelligence to critique these approaches. Why did Gardner select these eight abilities and not others (Barnett, Ceci, & Williams, 2006; White, 2006)? Yes, parents may marvel at a 6-year-old's creative or kinesthetic intelligence, but analytic intelligence will get this child into the school gifted program, not artistic productions or how well his body moves (Eisner, 2004).

We can also criticize Sternberg's ideas. Is there a creative or practical intelligence apart from a particular field? Adopting the idea that there is a single "creative" intelligence might lead to the conclusion that Michelangelo would be a talented musician or that Mozart could beautifully paint the Sistine Chapel.

The bottom line is that neither Gardner nor Sternberg has developed replacements for our current IQ test. But this does not matter. Their mission is to transform the way schools teach (Gardner & Moran, 2006; Sternberg, 2010).

Lessons for Schools

Gardner's theory has been embraced by teachers who understand that intelligence involves more than traditional academic skills. However, to implement his ideas requires revolutionizing the way we structure education. Therefore, the main use of multiple intelligences theory has been in helping "nontraditional learners" succeed (Schirduan & Case, 2004). Here is how Mark, a dyslexic teenager, describes his use of spatial intelligence to cope with the maze of facts in history class:

> I'll picture things; for example, if we are studying the French revolution . . . Louis the 16th . . . I'll have a picture of him in my mind [and I'll visualize] the castle and peasants to help me learn.
>
> (quoted in Schirduan & Case, 2004, p. 93)

Sternberg, being an experimentalist, has put his theory through rigorous tests. Does instruction tailored to each type of intelligence produce better achievement than teaching in the traditional way? Unfortunately, when Sternberg's research team carried out a massive intervention trial — assigning 7,702 fourth graders in 223 classrooms to either be taught according to his theory or using several typical approaches — the outcome was inconsistent (Sternberg and others, 2014). So, while the concept of successful intelligence is intuitively appealing, it's not clear that Sternberg's ideas merit changing the way classrooms operate. How *do* classrooms operate? ■

Classroom Learning

The diversity of intelligences, cultures, and educational experiences at home is matched by the diversity of American schools. There are small rural schools and large urban schools, public and private schools, traditional schools where students wear uniforms, and schools that teach according to Gardner's intelligences. There are single-sex schools, charter schools, religious schools, magnet schools that cater to gifted students, and alternative schools for children with behavior problems or learning disabilities.

Can students thrive in every school? The answer is yes, provided schools have an intense commitment to student learning and teachers can excite students to learn. The rest of this chapter focuses on these challenges.

Examining Successful Schools

What qualities make a school successful? Insights come from surveying public elementary schools that are beating the odds. These schools, while serving mainly economically disadvantaged children, have students who are thriving.

In the Vista School, located on a Native American reservation, virtually all of the students are classified as low-income. However, Vista consistently boasts dramatic improvements on statewide reading and math tests. According to Ms. Thompson, the principal, "Our job is not to make excuses for children, but give them every possible

opportunity. At Vista, teachers refuse to dumb down the curriculum. We offer tons of high-level conceptual work" (quoted in Borko and others, 2003, p. 177).

At Beacon Elementary School, in Washington State, 2 out of every 3 students exceed state-mandated writing standards despite coming from impoverished backgrounds. Here, Susie Murphy, the principal, comments: "You can . . . say, these kids are poor. You just need to love them. Or you can [say] . . . the best way to love them is to give them an education so they can make choices in their life" (quoted in Borko and others, 2003, p. 186). Beacon teachers, she continues, "are . . . committed to proving that kids who live in poverty can learn every bit as well as other kids" (p. 192). The teachers' goal is to challenge all their students. The school builds in opportunities for teachers to share ideas: "We have mini-workshops in geometry, or problem solving. Our whole staff talks about the general focus and where math is going" (p. 194).

Committed teachers, professional collaboration, and a mission to "deliver for *all* our kids" explains why a rural Florida elementary school serving mainly low-income children boosted the test scores of its most struggling students in a single year. Rather than isolating boys and girls with "learning differences," this school embedded every child into academic life. Before instituting their focus on inclusiveness, only 1 in 3 at-risk children ranked as proficient in math and language arts. At the year's end, these rates shot upward — to roughly 2 in 3 students.

As Ms. Richards, the principal, explained: "We've got to . . . meet all [kids'] needs. . . . That's how we started . . . to make . . . everyone successful." A special education teacher named Ms. Wood added, "At our school . . . the meat of the curriculum is presented to everyone" (adapted from McLeskey, Waldron, & Redd, 2014, p. 63).

In sum, successful schools set high standards. Teachers believe that every child can benefit from challenging, conceptual work. These schools embody *collective efficacy*, reaching out to nurture each member of the staff. In Baumrind's parenting styles framework, these schools are *authoritative* in their approach.

Now that we know what is effective, let's tackle the challenge every teacher faces: inspiring students to learn.

Producing Eager Learners

> But to go to school in a summer morn,
>
> O! it drives all joy away;
>
> Under a cruel eye outworn,
>
> The little ones spend the day
>
> In sighing and dismay.
>
> — William Blake, from "The Schoolboy" (1794)

Jean Piaget believed that the hunger to learn is more important than food or drink. Why, then, do children over the centuries lament, "I hate school"? The reason is that learning loses its joy when it becomes a requirement instead of an activity we choose to engage in for ourselves.

The Problem: An Erosion of Intrinsic Motivation Developmentalists divide motivation into two categories. **Intrinsic motivation** refers to self-generated actions, activities that arise from our inner desires. When Piaget described our hunger to learn, he was referring to intrinsic motivation. **Extrinsic motivation** refers to activities that we undertake in order to get external reinforcers, such as praise or pay or a good grade.

Unfortunately, the learning activity you are currently engaged in falls into the extrinsic category. You know you will be tested on what you are reading. Worse yet, if you pick up this book for an intrinsic reason — because you want to learn about lifespan development — the fact that you are being graded might cause your basic interest to fade.

intrinsic motivation The drive to act based on the pleasure of taking that action in itself, not for an external reinforcer or reward.

extrinsic motivation The drive to act based on getting external reinforcers such as praise, money, or a good grade.

Numerous studies show that, when adults give external reinforcers for activities that are intrinsically motivating, children are less likely to want to perform those activities for themselves (Ryan & Deci, 2020). In one classic example, researchers selected preschoolers who were intrinsically interested in art. When they gave a "good player" award (an outside reinforcer) for the art projects, the children later showed a dramatic decline in their interest in doing art for fun (Lepper, Greene, & Nisbett, 1973). This research makes sense of the question you may have wondered about: "Why, after taking that literature class, am I *less* interested in reading on my own?"

Young children enter kindergarten brimming with intrinsic motivation. When does this love affair with school turn sour? Think back to your childhood, and you will realize that enchantment wanes during early elementary school, when teachers provide those external reinforcers — grades (Stipek, 1997). Moreover, during first or second grade, classroom learning often becomes abstract and removed from life. Rote activities, like filling in worksheets and memorizing multiplication tables, have replaced the creative hands-on projects of kindergarten. So, ironically, school may be the very setting where Piaget's little-scientist activities (described in Chapter 3) are *least* likely to occur.

Pra Chid/Shutterstock

Put yourself in the position of this third grader mindlessly filling out worksheets and you will understand why, during elementary school, many children say, "I hate school."

Then, as children enter concrete operations — at around age 8 — and begin comparing their performance to their peers, this competitive orientation further erodes intrinsic motivation (Dweck, 1986; Self-Brown & Mathews, 2003). The focus shifts from "I want to improve for myself" to "I want to do *better* than my friends."

In sum, several forces explain why many children dislike school. School involves extrinsic reinforcers (grades). School learning, because it often involves rote memorization, is not intrinsically interesting. In school, children cannot set their own learning goals. Their performance is judged by how they measure up compared to the rest of the class.

Therefore, it is no wonder that *meta-analyses* document an alarming global decline in intrinsic motivation as children travel through school (Ryan & Deci, 2020). Susan Harter (1981) asked children to choose between two statements: "Some kids work really hard to get good grades" (referring to extrinsic motivation) or "Some kids work really hard because they like to learn new things" (measuring intrinsic motives). When she gave these alternatives to hundreds of California public school children, intrinsic motivation declined from third to ninth grade.

Still, external reinforcers can be vital hooks that get us intrinsically involved. Have you ever reluctantly taken a required class (perhaps even this course in lifespan development) and found yourself captivated by the subject? Given that extrinsically motivating activities are basic to school and life, how can we make them work best?

The Solution: Making Extrinsic Learning Part of Us To answer this question, Edward Deci and Richard Ryan (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Ryan & Deci, 2020) argue that we engage in some types of extrinsic learning unwillingly: "I have to take that terrible anatomy course because it is a requirement for graduation." We enthusiastically embrace other extrinsic tasks, which may not be inherently interesting, because we identify with their larger goal: "I want to memorize every bone of the body because that information is vital to my nursing career." In the first situation, the learning activity is irrelevant. In the second, the task has become intrinsic because it is connected to our inner self. Therefore, the key to transforming school learning into a pleasure is to make extrinsic learning relate to children's goals and desires.

The most boring tasks take on an intrinsic aura when they speak to children's passions. Imagine, for instance, how a first grader's motivation to sound out words

might change if a teacher, knowing that student was captivated by dinosaurs, gave that child the job of sounding out dinosaur names. Deci and Ryan believe that learning becomes intrinsic when it satisfies our basic need for relatedness (attachment). Finally, extrinsic tasks take on an intrinsic feeling when they foster autonomy, or offer us choices about how to do our work.

Studies around the globe suggest that when teachers and parents take away children's autonomy — by controlling, criticizing, or micromanaging learning tasks — they erode intrinsic motivation (Nalipay, King, & Cai, 2020; Ryan & Deci, 2020). We can see this principle in our own lives. By continually denigrating our work, or hovering over every move, a controlling supervisor has the uncanny ability to turn us off to the most intrinsically interesting job.

Our need for autonomy explains why, as I suggested in the section on successful schools, assigning high-level conceptual learning tasks is effective with every child. Conversely, the poisonous effects of taking away autonomy suggest why the U.S. practice of forcing teachers to follow rigid requirements erodes satisfaction in this field ("I can't teach the way I want. I have to teach to the end-of-year tests, or I'll get fired").

But in a national experiment, when certain school districts gave staff the chance to choose between several new programs and provided clear data about effectiveness, teachers willingly embraced these options — and, after four years, students made impressive gains on standard reading tests (Slavin and others, 2013). Therefore, providing autonomy (giving choices) and fostering relevance (pointing out the importance of an activity to that person's goals) benefits *both* students and teachers (see Ryan & Deci, 2020)!

Table 7.6 summarizes these messages for teachers: Focus on relevance, enhance relatedness, and provide autonomy. The table also pulls together other teaching tips

Table 7.6: Lessons for Teachers: A Recap of This Chapter's Insights

General Principles

1. **Foster relevance.** For instance, in teaching reading, tailor your assigned books to fit children's passions. And entice students to learn to read in other ways, such as energizing first and second graders by telling them they will be able to break a code just like a detective!
2. **Foster relatedness.** Develop a secure, loving attachment with every student. Continually tell children how proud you are when they try hard or succeed.
3. **Foster autonomy.** As much as possible, allow your students to select among several equivalent assignments (such as choosing which specific books to read). Don't give time limits, such as "It's 9:30 and this has to be done by 10:00," and don't hover, take over tasks, or make negative comments. Stand by to provide information and careful scaffolding (see Chapter 5) when students ask. Build in assignments that allow high-level thinking, such as writing essays instead of rote work such as copying sentences or filling out worksheets.

Teaching Tips Based on Gardner's and Sternberg's Theories

1. Offer balanced assignments that capitalize on students' different kinds of intelligence — creative work such as essays; practical-intelligence activities such as calculating numbers to make change at a store; and classroom time devoted to music, dance, art, and caring for plants (capitalizing on Gardner's ideas).
2. Explicitly teach students to use their different intelligences in mastering classroom work.

Additional Teaching Tips

1. Don't rely on IQ test scores in assessing the abilities of low-income or non-native-English-speaking students; this number says little about children's true academic potential.
2. Avoid praising children for being "brilliant." Compliment them for hard work. Most important, give students the concrete tools to succeed.
3. Strive for excellence. Expect all students to perform well.
4. Foster collaborative work. Grade competition is not only tailor-made to reduce intrinsic motivation, but it may also be a reason why relational aggression becomes rampant in later elementary school (see Chapter 6).
5. Minimize students' tendency to make grade-oriented comparisons (such as who got As, Bs, Cs, and so on) by emphasizing that what matters is personal improvement.

based on Gardner's and Sternberg's perspectives on intelligence and our look at what makes schools successful.

Now that we understand what's needed, let's tackle that interesting question: Can an exceptional elementary school teacher change students' lives?

Think back to your favorite teacher. Perhaps it was the talented instructor who transformed a hated math class into a magical journey, or a middle-school teacher who believed in your gifts, even though you were struggling in class. You always felt this person made an enduring difference in your life. Now scientific data show you were right!

In meticulous studies, economist Raj Chetty and his colleagues (Chetty, Friedman, & Rockoff, 2014) tracked the performance of two million students enrolled in an urban elementary school district as the children traveled into their twenties. The researchers identified what they called *value-added teachers* — educators whose students showed elevated bumps on end-of-year state tests, compared to the typical teacher a child would have in that grade. The economists were amazed to find that students who were taught by a value-added teacher for one year were more likely to attend college and less prone to have babies as teens. They earned more money than their classmates during emerging adulthood, too. Based on tax data at age 28, the researchers calculated that each student's boost in lifetime earnings as a result of having this exceptional teacher for a *single year* was roughly $40,000.

We talk about good educators being worth their weight in gold. This study shows that cliché is literally true. According to Chetty's calculations, a single value-added teacher can boost an entire class's lifetime earnings by over half a million dollars!

Trending in Developmental Science: Communities Matter in Children's Success

Throughout this chapter—from discussing the power of peers to living in neighborhoods high in collective efficacy to attending good schools—I've been making the case that *where* children grow up makes a difference in their lives. Again, Raj Chetty's landmark research brings that message home.

Chetty's research team calculated the odds of *upward mobility*—rising in social status—for children growing up in *every* county in the United States. Even given equal family income, living in a "better community" made it more likely for impoverished children to make it into the middle class (Chetty and others, 2018).

What is a "better community"? One answer comes as no surprise: Communities that promote upward mobility have less concentrated poverty, more high-ranked schools, a higher percentage of two-parent families, and less crime. But these places also stand out as special in less obvious ways. In counties fostering upward mobility, income inequality is less dramatic—that is, there isn't such a huge gap between the rich and the poor. Moreover, in these communities, low-income children's economic strides don't come at the expense of their relatively affluent peers. In upwardly mobile counties, Chetty's calculations showed, children whose families ranked at the 75th percentile of the income distribution also rose in socioeconomic status (though not as much).

Does decent housing cost more in these communities? Not necessarily. For instance, at that time in the New York City area, the researchers found that children being raised in Hudson County, New Jersey, had far higher rates of upward mobility than their age-mates in the New York City boroughs of Queens or the Bronx, even though the median rents in these areas were roughly the same.

Does moving to a better area during early childhood matter most? Here, the answer is definitely yes. In fact, if families relocate to an upwardly mobile community when their children are young, and remain through high school, their sons and daughters benefit greatly. Twenty years spent in DuPage County, Illinois (ranked highest in upward mobility), versus in low-ranked Baltimore, Maryland, statistically increased a given poverty-level child's annual income by one-third. Moreover, staying in deprived low-mobility communities is especially toxic for boys.

Not unexpectedly, social mobility varies by the racial makeup of neighborhoods. High-mobility places are more ethnically (and economically) diverse. Being locked in segregated poverty-level zip codes makes it unusually difficult for Black boys, in particular, to construct a middle-class life.

One strategy is to move children into more efficacious, multicultural neighborhoods (Bergman and others, 2019). But, unfortunately, racial disparities in earnings still exist, even when Black and White boys grow up on the same city block and attend the same schools (Chetty and others, 2018). So we need to change the ingrained biases that make race a signal for society to *immediately* assume the worst of a child (much more about this unfortunate reality in Chapter 9).

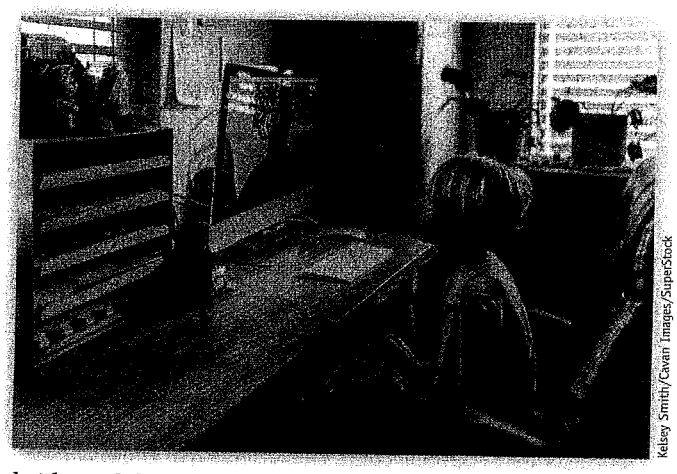
Final Thoughts: *After* the COVID Crisis, Could Opportunity Lurk?

As I am finishing this chapter (at the start of 2021), we have evidence that the isolation, stress, and income loss associated with the COVID-19 crisis can, not unexpectedly, ravage child mental health (Azevedo and others, 2020; Masonbrink & Hurley, 2020). But what about this tragedy's long-term effect? Might weathering this upheaval eventually promote resilience? Could it encourage us to bond as human beings and reach out to our neighbors, regardless of race, age, and background? Right now, we do not know. But you, the post-pandemic reader, will have better answers to whether the uplifting phrase "we are all in this together" really does ring true.

At a minimum, the pandemic has offered a once-in-a-century chance to restructure homes and schools. Moving to more intergenerational living to save money (more about this family change in Chapter 10) might have unexpected child-rearing benefits, compared to our isolated single-parenting style, as I suggested at the beginning of this chapter. Possibly shifting to some days learning at home, or instituting year-round classes, might enhance relatedness by allowing teachers to teach in smaller, more intimate groups.

Remote learning (no surprise) takes a toll on academic progress (Azevedo and others, 2020). To develop academically — and thrive as human beings — children must connect with *real-life* teachers and peers. But the hybrid model, staggering learning between home and school, does have the benefit of breaking up the monotony of being chained to a desk for hours. Could this cataclysmic trauma get society to rethink how we educate children? Can we *finally* make school a place where students love to learn?

In the next chapters, I'll expand on the critical role our unique society plays in shaping every aspect of development, as we journey into the adolescent years.



Kelsey Smith/Cavan Images/SuperStock

Imagine being this child and spending your school hours in isolation facing this screen. Doesn't it make sense that exclusively learning at home — without ever going to class — blunts children's mental health?

Tying It All Together

1. If Devin, from an upper-middle-class family, and Ashton, from a low-income family, are starting kindergarten, predict which statement is most accurate:
   a. Both children will perform equally well on school readiness tests, but Ashton will fall behind because he is likely to attend a poor-quality kindergarten.
   b. Devin will outperform Ashton on school readiness tests, and the gap will probably widen because Ashton is likely to attend a poor-quality kindergarten.
2. Maddox hasn't been doing well in school, and his achievement test scores have consistently been well below average for his grade. On the WISC, Maddox gets an IQ score of 115. What is your conclusion?
3. You are telling a friend about the deficiencies of relying on a child's IQ score. Pick *two* arguments you might make.
   a. The tests are not reliable; children's scores typically change a lot during the elementary school years.
   b. The tests are not valid predictors of school performance.
   c. As people have different abilities, a single IQ score may not tell us much about a child's unique gifts.
   d. As impoverished children are at a disadvantage in taking the test, you should not use the IQ scores as an index of "genetic school-related talents" for low-income children.
4. Hyejin doesn't do well in reading or math, but she excels in music and dance, and she gets along with all kinds of children. According to Sternberg's theory of successful intelligence, Hyejin is not good in _____, but she is skilled in _____ and _____. According to Gardner's theory of _____, Hyejin is strong in which intelligences?
5. A school principal asks for tips to help her students with learning difficulties. Based on this section, you should advise (pick one): *making the material simple/putting these children together in a special class/providing high-level creative work and embedding these children in the life of the school.*
6. (a) Define intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. (b) Give an example of a task in your life right now being driven by each kind of motivation. (c) Based on your reading, can you come up with ways to make these unpleasant extrinsic tasks feel more intrinsic?
7. Your friend wants to move out of her dangerous Chicago neighborhood. But she is afraid that if she relocates to an economically diverse section of the city, her daughter will be classified as "the poor kid in the neighborhood," and be rejected by her classmates. Based on Chetty's research, what should you advise?

Answers to the Tying It All Together questions can be found at the end of this chapter.

SUMMARY

Home

Families vary, from never-divorced two-parent couples to blended families, from gay-parent families to unmarried couples or grandparents raising a child. The main distinction is that single-parent families are far more likely to live in poverty than their two-parent counterparts. In less affluent nations, extended families often live together. The solo-parent U.S. arrangement may not be optimal for parents' and children's mental health.

According to Diana Baumrind's **parenting styles** approach, based on setting rules and nurturing, parents are classified as **authoritative**, **authoritarian**, **permissive**, or **rejecting-neglecting**. Research worldwide shows authoritative parenting is best, although when children are "harder to raise" and parents live in dangerous neighborhoods, child-rearing changes for the worse. Living in close supportive enclaves may explain why Hispanic Americans live longer than other major U.S. groups.

In grappling with **acculturation**, it's best for parents to socialize children to value their heritage and reach out to the wider community. **Collective efficacy**, living in supportive nurturing communities and feeling secure as human beings, permits *all* parents to act authoritative in daily life.

Resilient children, boys and girls who do well in the face of traumatic life experiences, tend to have good executive

functions; possess special talents; and are not faced with an overload of life blows. Having a resilient hormonal profile, and at least one close attachment, is critical to flowering in the face of adversity.

Behavioral-genetic researchers argue that children grow up to fulfill their genetic destiny, and adequate parenting is all that is necessary. Judith Harris believes that peer groups—not parents—are the main socializers in children's lives. Exceptional parenting, however, is crucial when children are biologically and socially at risk. Parents need to be authoritative and flexible, tailoring their child-rearing to their culture, their unique child, and their personal priorities. They should also relax and enjoy these fleeting years.

Attitudes about **corporal punishment** have changed dramatically, with many nations now outlawing spanking. The United States is an outlier because many U.S. parents use this discipline style. While a few psychologists argue that spanking, under limited occasions, is acceptable, hundreds of studies show corporal punishment is detrimental to children's well-being.

Child maltreatment—physical abuse, neglect, emotional abuse, or sexual abuse—can be hard to classify. Maltreatment statistics differ, depending on whether we ask adults to reflect on their childhoods or consider observers' reports. Parents' personality problems, severe life stress, low community support, and having an at-risk child are the main factors that can provoke abuse. Abused children typically have problems that persist through adult life. Although some states require teachers and health-care professionals to report suspected abuse, it can be difficult for anyone to speak up, especially when the abusive parent might be a neighbor, relative, or friend. Because there are so many reasons not to report suspected abuse, statistics underestimate true maltreatment rates.

Children of divorce are at risk for negative economic and psychological outcomes, but most boys and girls adapt well to this common childhood event. Keys to making divorce less traumatic lie in minimizing other life changes and avoiding **parental alienation. Joint custody** does not work when children are put in the middle between battling spouses. In coping with a difficult divorce, it's best for children to emotionally disengage from the turmoil and focus on their passions. Authoritative parenting, however, is the real key to children's post-divorce well-being.

School

Many children from low-income families enter kindergarten well behind their affluent counterparts in basic academic skills. These inequalities at the starting gate are magnified because low-income children attend the poorest-quality kindergartens.

Intelligence quotient (IQ) tests measure a child's basic potential to succeed at school. **Achievement tests** measure a child's knowledge. The **Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children (WISC)** is the main childhood IQ test, has specific parts, and is given individually to a child. If the IQ score is below 70—and if other indicators warrant this designation—a child may be labeled as **intellectually disabled.** If the child's score is much higher than his performance on achievement tests, he is classified as having a **specific learning disorder** such as **dyslexia.** If a child's IQ score is at or above 130, she is considered **gifted** and is eligible to be placed in an accelerated class.

IQ scores satisfy the measurement criterion called **reliability**, meaning that people tend to get roughly the same score if they take the test more than once. However, stressful life experiences can artificially lower a child's score. The test is also **valid** if our benchmark is predicting school performance. Some psychologists believe that the test score reflects a single quality called **g** that predicts success in every area of life; others feel that intelligence involves many different abilities and that it is inappropriate to rank people as intelligent or not based on a single IQ score. The remarkable **Flynn effect** (an increase in test performance over the last century due to improved environments) suggests that, for disadvantaged children, the IQ score does not accurately reflect a person's genetic gifts.

Robert Sternberg and Howard Gardner argue that we need to expand our measures of intelligence beyond traditional tests. Sternberg believes that there are three types of intelligence: **analytic intelligence** (academic abilities), **creative intelligence**, and **practical intelligence** (real-world abilities, or "street smarts"). **Successful intelligence** requires having a good balance among these three skills. Gardner, in his **multiple intelligences theory**, describes eight (or possibly nine) types of intelligence. Although neither of these psychologists has developed alternatives to conventional IQ tests, their ideas allow us to rethink the way we teach.

Schools that serve disadvantaged students who flower academically share a mission to have every child succeed. They provide a challenging academic environment and assume that each student can do well at high-level work. Teachers support and mentor one another at these high-collective efficacy schools.

Why do many children dislike school? The reason is that classroom learning is based on **extrinsic motivation** (external reinforcers such as grades), which impairs **intrinsic motivation** (the desire to learn for the sake of learning). School learning is inherently less interesting because it often involves rote memorization. Being evaluated in comparison to the class also limits a child's interest in learning for learning's sake. Studies show a disturbing decline in intrinsic motivation as children move through elementary school.

Teachers (and parents) can make extrinsic learning tasks more intrinsic by offering class material relevant to children's interests, fostering relatedness (or a close attachment), and giving students choices about how to do their work. Rigorous statistical studies confirm that good teachers make an enduring difference in students' lives.

Studies tracking upward mobility in every U.S. county show that the neighborhood also matters in constructing a successful life. Economically diverse communities, with less income inequality, benefit disadvantaged children and their relatively affluent counterparts. Growing up in racially segregated, impoverished, low-efficacy neighborhoods makes it virtually impossible for Black boys to construct a middle-class life.

Perhaps weathering the COVID crisis will promote resilience and the sense that we are one human community, and cause us to rethink how we educate children. How can we make society user-friendly for parents and make schools places where students love to learn?

KEY TERMS

acculturation, p. 196
achievement tests, p. 206
analytic intelligence, p. 210
authoritarian parents, p. 194
authoritative parents, p. 194
child maltreatment, p. 200
collective efficacy, p. 196
corporal punishment, p. 199
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ANSWERS TO the Tying It All Together QUIZZES

Home

1. Montana's parents = authoritative; Pablo's parents = authoritarian; Shirin's parents = permissive
2. (c) Both valuing your heritage and embracing your new nation makes for good mental health.
3. Judith Harris's advice: Get your son in the best possible peer group. This chapter's recommendation: Provide exceptionally sensitive parenting.
4. (a) and (c) Spanking an infant is never OK, and if a child has a difficult temperament, corporal punishment may exacerbate the situation.
5. Ms. Ramirez might decide not to report the situation for the following reasons: worries her perceptions may be incorrect; fears of being retaliated against; guilt about betraying a neighbor; imagining the authorities will not take any action; or that putting this child in foster care will make his living situation worse.
6. Is this relationship amicable, or do these former spouses continually fight?

School

1. (b) Unfortunately, Devin will start school at an academic advantage, and Ashton will likely attend a poor-quality kindergarten.
2. Maddox may have a learning disability.
3. (c) and (d) A single IQ score cannot reveal the whole picture because people have different abilities and may come from backgrounds that put them at a test-taking disadvantage.

4. Analytic intelligence; creative intelligence and practical intelligence; multiple intelligences; Hyejin's strengths are in musical, kinesthetic, and interpersonal intelligence.
5. You should suggest giving these children high-level creative work and embedding them in the life of the school.
6. (a) Intrinsic motivation is self-generated — we work at something simply because it gives us joy. Extrinsic motivation refers to activities propelled by external reinforcers like grades. (b) Ask yourself: Am I doing this because I love it or only because this activity results in an external reward? (c) 1. Make disliked, extrinsic tasks relevant to a larger personal goal. ("Cleaning the house will help me become a more organized person. Plus, it's great exercise, so I'll become healthier.") 2. Increase your sense of autonomy or feeling of having choices around this activity. ("I'll do my housecleaning at the time of day that feels least burdensome while I listen to my favorite podcast.") 3. Enhance attachments. ("If my significant other comes home to a clean house, they'll feel wonderful!")
7. Go for it!

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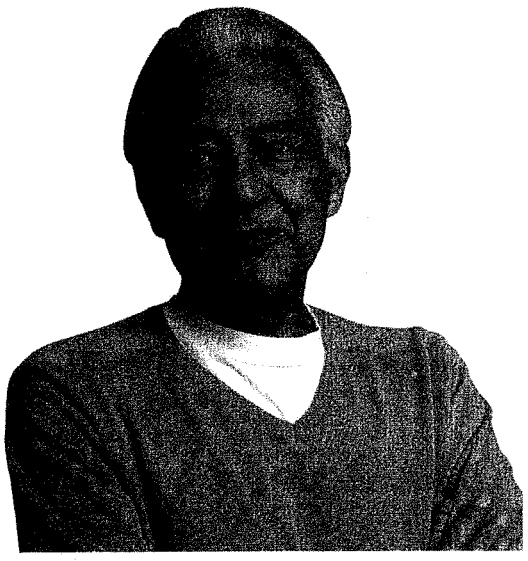

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