2. **Resistant attachment (insecure).** The infant stays close to the mother, doesn't explore, becomes upset when the mother leaves, is wary of strangers, and resists physical contact with the mother when she returns.
3. **Avoidant attachment (insecure).** The infant shows little distress when the mother leaves, may ignore or avoid the stranger, and ignores the mother when she returns.
4. **Disorganized/disoriented attachment (insecure).** The infant is very upset by the strange situation and appears confused about whether to approach or avoid the stranger; when the mother returns, the infant may seek contact and then withdraw (Main & Solomon, 1990).

The significance of the quality of attachment is that it correlates with later intellectual and social development (Lamb, Hwang, Ketterlinus, & Fracasso, 1999). Securely attached infants tend to be more attentive, curious, and confident, exploring various physical environments, exhibiting more social competence with peers, and being more compliant with adults in the preschool years.

4-8b Self-Regulation and Prosocial Behavior

Which parenting style is most likely to promote self-control and prosocial behavior in the child?

Baumrind's classic studies (1966, 1967, 1971, 1973) showed a strong correlation between parenting practices (studied via interviews) and observed self-regulation and prosocial behavior of American middle-class preschool children. Later studies (Brophy, 1989; Forman & Kochanska, 2001; Hart, DeWolf, & Burts, 1992) have supported Baumrind's findings that parenting style affects children's behavior. Table 4.2 outlines the relationship between parenting and children's behavior.

According to Baumrind, both the *authoritarian* and the *permissive* parents in her studies had unrealistic beliefs about young children. Whereas the strict or authoritarian parents thought the child's behavior must be constrained, the permissive parents tended to look at the child's behavior as natural and refreshing. Neither group seemed to take into account the child's stage of development—for example, the desire in early childhood

Table 4.2 Relationship of Parenting Styles to Children's Behavior

Parenting Style	Characteristics	Children's Behavior
Authoritative (democratic) "Do it because. . ."	Controlling but flexible Demanding but rational Warm Receptive to child's communication Values discipline, self-reliance, and uniqueness	Self-reliant Self-controlled, explorative Content Cooperative
Authoritarian (adult-centered) "Do it!"	Strict control (self-will curbed by punitive measures) Evaluation of child's behavior and attitudes with absolute standard Values obedience, respect for authority, and tradition	Discontent Withdrawn Fearful Distrustful
Permissive (child-centered) "Do you want to do it?"	Noncontrolling Nondemanding Acceptance of child's impulses Consults with child on policies	Poor self-reliance Impulsive Aggressive Hardly explorative Poor self-control
Uninvolved (insensitive and indifferent) "Do what you want."	Noncontrolling Nondemanding Indifferent to child's point of view and activities	Deficits in attachment, cognition, emotional and social skills, and behavior Poor self-control Low self-esteem

Source: Based on Baumrind (1967, 1971, 1991).

to model parental behavior or the inability in early childhood to reason when given a parental command. Thus, Baumrind and others (Steinberg, 2001; Steinberg et al., 1994) endorsed the *authoritative* parenting style for adapting to the European American values of independence, individualism, achievement, and self-regulation. Authoritative parents take into account their children's needs as well as their own before deciding how to deal with a situation. They exert control over their children's behavior when necessary, yet they respect their children's need to make their own decisions. Reasoning is used to explain parenting policies, and communication from the children is encouraged. Children experience democracy at home.

Most early parenting research involved young children, but more recent studies have included adolescents in order to reveal the long-term effects of parenting styles (Baumrind, 1991; Holmbeck, Paikoff, & Brooks-Gunn, 1995; Steinberg, 2001). Dornbusch, Ritter, Leiderman, and Roberts (1987) found that *authoritative* parenting is positively correlated, *authoritarian* and *permissive* parenting negatively correlated with adolescent school performance. Steinberg and his colleagues (Steinberg, Elmen, & Mounts, 1989; Steinberg, Mounts, Lamborn, & Dornbusch, 1991) confirmed the relationship between authoritative parenting and academic performance. They explained it as being due to the effects of authoritativeness on the development of a healthy sense of autonomy and, more specifically, on the development of a healthy psychological orientation toward work. Thus, authoritative parenting influences not only how a child behaves in the early years but also how a child deals with responsibility, as exhibited in adolescence.

Authoritative parenting is *not* the norm among various ethnic, religious, and socioeconomic groups in the United States and other countries. More common is the authoritarian style utilized by groups that closely adhere to their traditional cultural values (Greenfield, Suzuki, & Rothstein-Fisch, 2006). Cultural values, as we have discussed, are adaptive to the environment in which members of the group grow up.

Characteristic of some ethnic or religious groups, certain values, such as respect for elders and the need for social order, may influence child-rearing methods. For example, whereas authoritarian parenting is perceived by Americans and Europeans to be strict and regimented, stressing adult domination, it is perceived by Chinese people to be a means of training (*chaio shun*) and governing (*guan*) children in an involved and physically close way (Chao, 1994, 2001). The Chinese concept of authoritarianism comes from the Confucian emphasis on hierarchical relationships and social order. Standards exist not to dominate the child but to preserve the integrity of the family unit and assure harmonious relations with others (Greenfield, Suzuki, & Rothstein-Fisch, 2006).

Characteristic of lower socioeconomic statuses, certain conditions, such as lack of social supports or living in dangerous neighborhoods, may make strict discipline (authoritarian style) necessary to protect children from becoming involved in antisocial activities (Conger & Dogan, 2007; Hoffman, 2003).

Thus, Baumrind's definition of authoritarian parenting (controlling without warmth) and child development outcomes (discontent, withdrawal, distrust, lack of instrumental competence) does *not* always apply cross-culturally or across social classes.

How do parents promote socioemotional and cognitive competence?

4-8c Socioemotional and Cognitive Competence

Competence, as defined earlier, refers to a pattern of effective adaptation to one's environment; it involves behavior that is socially responsible, independent, friendly, cooperative, dominant, achievement-oriented, and purposeful. Research over the past few decades has shown that preschool children who exhibit social and emotional competence later show positive academic, social, and psychological outcomes. Children who are socially and emotionally competent have close relationships with their parents, more friends, and academic success in school. Children who lack emotional and social competence

Table 4.3 The Harvard Preschool Project: Differences in Learning

Competent Children	Incompetent Children
Get attention in socially acceptable ways	Remain unnoticed or are disruptive
Use adults as resources	Need a lot of direction to complete a task
Get along well with others	Have difficulty getting along with others
Plan and carry out complicated tasks	Lack ability to anticipate consequences
Use and understand complex sentences	Have a simplistic vocabulary

are at risk for peer rejection, behavioral problems, and low academic achievement (McCabe & Altamura, 2011). In an important review of studies on competence and resilience to stressful events in both favorable and unfavorable environments, Masten and Coatsworth (1998) found the key ingredient in the development of adaptive skills leading to competence and resilience to be secure parent-child relationships and encouragement of cognition and self-regulation (includes attention, emotion, and behavior). Studies of factors that promote competence and resilience are significant for the development of early childhood intervention programs for children in unfavorable environments (McCabe & Altamura, 2011).

In a famous study, Burton White and his colleagues at Harvard (1971; White & Watts, 1973) studied the relationship between parenting styles and the development of *competence* versus *incompetence* in preschoolers. First, they had preschool teachers rate children ages 3–6, representing different socioeconomic statuses, as "competent" or "incompetent" (see Table 4.3). Then, to find out when the differences in competence appeared, the researchers went into the homes of the competent and incompetent children who had younger siblings and observed the mother-child interaction from infancy to age 3.

No differences in competency were found between infants who were siblings of competent versus incompetent children. Yet by 10 months of age, differences in competency began to show up; by age 2, and often as early as 18 months, children could be classified as competent or incompetent. What is so significant about the period of development between 10 and 18 months? This period is the time when children begin to talk, walk, explore, and assert themselves. It is during this time that the parenting style is revealed—a good example of the bidirectionality of the parent-child relationship. How did the parenting styles differ?

Parenting Style Differences of Mothers of Competent and Incompetent Children Generally, the mothers of competent children were flexible, responding to their child as needed and adjusting the environment accordingly. In contrast, the mothers of incompetent children were either rigid, structuring the interaction with the child and the environment according to their standards; or they were lax, being unresponsive to the child and his or her environment. Specifically, mothers of *competent* children:

- designed a safe physical environment at home so their children could explore and discover things on their own
- provided interesting things to manipulate; these could be pots and spoons as well as commercial toys
- spent no more than 10 percent of their time deliberately interacting with their children, yet they were always "on call" when needed
- made themselves available to share in their children's exciting discoveries, answer their children's questions, or help their children in an activity for a few minutes here and there while they went about their daily routines

- enjoyed their children and were patient, energetic, and tolerant of messes, accidents, and natural curiosity
- set limits on behavior and were firm and consistent in their discipline
- disciplined according to age—used distraction with infants under age 1; distraction and physical removal of either the child or the object from age 1 to 1½; and distraction, physical distance, and firm words after age 1½

Mothers of *incompetent* children had the following characteristics:

- Some spent little time with their children; they were overwhelmed by their daily struggles and their homes were disorganized.
- Some spent a great deal of time with their children; they were overprotective and pushed their children to learn.
- Some provided for their children materially, such as giving them toys, but restricted their children's instincts to explore by ruling certain places and possessions out of bounds.
- Most used playpens and gates extensively.

In sum, White's research has shown that human competence develops between 10 and 18 months, and it is the parenting style that fosters competence. According to White (1995), the informal education provided by families for their children has more of an impact on a child's total educational development than does the formal educational system. Such an informal initial education essentially enables the child to "learn how to learn" or motivates him or her to achieve.

Research on school-age children confirms the connection between parenting style and competence/achievement in school (Grolnick & Ryan, 1989; Wigfield & Eccles, 2002). Other researchers (Gauvain & Perez, 2007) might classify White's findings as a social approach to cognitive development. The social processes involved are collaboration, guided participation, parent-child conversation, observational learning, and participation in socially organized activities.

To assess the relationship of the environment provided by families to the achievement motivation and consequent cognitive development of the child, Caldwell, Bradley, and colleagues (Bradley, 2002; Bradley, Caldwell, & Rock, 1990; Caldwell & Bradley, 1984) developed an assessment scale to determine the quality of the home environment for children under age 3. This scale, called HOME (Home Observation for the Measurement of the Environment), contains 45 items in the following six areas:

1. **Emotional and verbal responsiveness.** The parent responded to the child's vocalizations with verbal response.
2. **Avoidance of restriction and punishment.** The parent did not interfere with the child's actions or prohibit him or her more than three times during the observation.
3. **Organization of the physical and temporal environment.** The child's play environment was accessible to him or her and was safe.
4. **Provision of appropriate play materials.** The child had toys that were safe and age-appropriate, and that stimulated play.
5. **Parental interaction with the child.** The parent kept the child within visual range and looked at, touched, or talked to the child frequently.
6. **Opportunities for variety in daily stimulation.** The parent read stories or played games with the child.

Studies examining the relation between young diverse preschoolers' HOME scores and their IQ scores, as well as later academic achievement in middle school (Wen-Jui, Leventhal, & Linver, 2004), showed a strong positive correlation (Bradley

et al., 1990). Also, as White's group discovered, the most critical time for influencing a child's achievement motivation and intellectual development is the first two years of life.

What about the relationship between home environment and adolescence? A HOME scale version was later developed to measure the quantity and quality of stimulation, support, and structure available to diverse children ages 10–15 in their home environments. There was a significant relationship between family context and cognitive development (Bradley et al., 2000).

4-9 Mesosystem Influences on Parenting Style: Interactions Between Parents and Others

How do links between parents and significant others affect child outcomes?

The impact of parental socialization techniques is enhanced by supportive links with other microsystems, such as the school and the community (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006; Cochran & Niego, 2002). (See Table 4.4.) When family and school or community values are collaborative, positive child outcomes are likely; when family and school or community values are conflicted, the child is at risk for school failure, delinquency, and substance abuse (Sameroff, 2006; Wang, 2000).

The U.S. Department of Education has a program, "Family Involvement Partnership for Learning," that provides information to schools and parents on collaboration. Families' links to schools include parent education, conferences with children's teachers, and participation in school activities (Epstein & Sanders, 2002; Epstein & Sheldon, 2006). Such activities support parenting. Parents of adolescents who ake time to talk to their children about school, homework, and activities, and who show support and confidence in their abilities, have adolescents who are achievement-oriented (Wang & Wildman, 1995). Parent involvement in schools will be discussed in Chapter 6.

The community is considered here to include social environments outside the family context of parenting, such as the community where one lives and the services provided by the community. Communities that are "family friendly," are those where families can readily find affordable housing, accessible child care, parks in which to play, quality schools, and safe neighborhoods (American Planning Association, 2008).

Parenting practices are influenced by the neighborhood in which a family resides, such as rural or urban, safe or unsafe, stable or mobile (Bugental & Grusec, 2006). It has been found that when parents perceive their neighborhoods to be dangerous and low in social control, they place more restrictions on their children's activities (Cebello & McLoyd, 2002).

Community services include *informal* supports (relatives and friends are examples) and *formal* supports (psychologists and employers are examples). Each of these types of

Table 4.4 Bioecological Influences on Parenting Styles

Child Characteristics	Family Characteristics	Community Characteristics
Age and cognitive development	Size (number of siblings)	Supportive social environments
Temperament (easy, slow to warm up, difficult)	Configuration (birth order, spacing, gender of siblings)	Informal network: gemeinschaft relationships
Gender	Life stage Marital quality	Formal network: gesellschaft relationships
Presence of a special need	Abilities to cope with stress	