Is there a Relationship Between Parenting Styles and Sibling Relationships in Families Raising a Child With a Disability?

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Of 53.9 million children ages 5 to 17 in 2010, about 2.8 million had a disability.

Parent/family factors are stronger predictors of sibling adjustment difficulties than siblings’ own experiences of stress and coping.

Ambiguous findings related to sibling relationships in families raising a child with a disability (CWD):
- Some positive
- Some negative

Minimal information about parenting in families raising a CWD.
Purpose

Examine perceptions of parenting styles and sibling relationships according to

- Parent gender
- Sibling gender
- Type of disability

Determine whether or not there is a linkage between parenting styles and sibling relationships in families raising a CWD
Sample

- 124 mothers; 108 fathers
  - CWD families: Shriners Hospital, conferences for families raising a CWD, early intervention programs
  - Control group: snowball referral

- CWD:
  - Autism \( n=39 \)
  - Multiple disabilities \( n=23 \)
  - Mental retardation \( n=44 \)
  - Orthopedic condition \( n=34 \)
  - Other \( n=15 \)
    - speech problems, coordination problems, hearing impairments, vision problems, paralysis, cerebral palsy

- Control: \( n=37 \)
Each parent individually completed
- 62-item Parenting Practices Report
- 28-item Schaefer Sibling Inventory of Behavior

Mothers completed a demographic questionnaire
Parenting Practices Report

- **Authoritative**
  - Encourages children to be independent but still places limits and controls on their actions

- **Authoritarian**
  - Restrictive, punitive style in which parents exhort the child to follow their directions and to respect their work and effort

- **Permissive**
  - Parents are very involved with their children but place few demands or controls on them

Likert scale: 1 (never) to 5 (always)
Sibling Inventory of Behavior

- Evaluates sibling relationships according to how often parents see:
  - Kindness
  - Avoidance
  - Involvement
  - Empathy

- Likert scale: 1 (never) to 5 (always)
Statistical analysis

- Descriptive
- Correlations
- ANOVA
## Parent demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Mean (SD) OR %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mothers' age</td>
<td>39.74 (7.26)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fathers’ age</td>
<td>41.49 (7.38)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mothers' education</td>
<td>14.95 years (2.05)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fathers' education</td>
<td>15.9 years (2.61)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mothers' work/week</td>
<td>13.71 (16.16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fathers’ work/week</td>
<td>45.05(10.54)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% mothers working full time</td>
<td>32.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% fathers working full time</td>
<td>82.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sample description

CWD
- 59.3% male
- Mean age 8.50 years (SD = 4.42).

Siblings
- 46.5% male
- Mean age 10.43 years (SD = 3.28):

Families
- 85.8% Caucasian
- 87.8% two-parent
- Most earned more than $50,000
Results: Parenting Practices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Parents Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Authoritative</td>
<td>3.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authoritarian</td>
<td>1.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permissive</td>
<td>1.84</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Interpretation: parents between sometimes and often authoritative, and seldom authoritarian or permissive
## Results: Sibling Relationships

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sibling Mean</th>
<th>Avoidance</th>
<th>Kindness</th>
<th>Involvement</th>
<th>Empathy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.73</td>
<td>3.51</td>
<td>3.44</td>
<td>4.02</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Interpretation: siblings seldom avoid, are between sometimes and often kind and involved, and are often empathetic.
Significant Differences in Variables According to Parent Gender

- Authoritative parenting $p < .001$
- Sibling kindness $p < .05$
## Significant Differences: Sibling Relationship Variables According to Sibling and Parent Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mothers</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involvement*</td>
<td>3.28</td>
<td>3.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empathy**</td>
<td>3.92</td>
<td>4.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fathers</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empathy*</td>
<td>3.84</td>
<td>4.15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p < .05  ** p < .01
Significant Correlations: Parenting and Sibling Relationship Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Involvement</th>
<th>Empathy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Mothers</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authoritative</td>
<td>-.28**</td>
<td>.39**</td>
<td>.27**</td>
<td>.45**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authoritarian</td>
<td>-.18*</td>
<td></td>
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<td>-.23*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permissive</td>
<td>.19*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td><strong>Fathers</strong></td>
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<td>Authoritarian</td>
<td>-.37**</td>
<td>-.31**</td>
<td>-.34**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p < .05   ** p < .01
Sibling Kindness and Authoritarian Parenting According to Disability

Sibling Kindness p < .001; Authoritarian Parenting p < .05
Results

Parents rated sibling relationships positively

Mothers
- more authoritative than fathers
- believed female siblings more involved than male siblings

Fathers: siblings kinder than mothers

Both parents: female siblings more empathetic than male siblings

Authoritative parenting: positively related to kindness, involvement, and empathy for both parents

Authoritarian parenting: negatively related to kindness and empathy for both parents

Permissive parenting: positively related to avoidance for mothers only

Authoritarian parenting: negatively related to involvement for fathers only
Results, continued

- Parenting styles and sibling kindness vary according to type of disability
  - Parents more authoritarian if child has Orthopedic condition
  - Kindness highest in families raising a child with multiple disabilities
Implications

Knowing which parenting practices are likely to be associated with different disabilities helps health care providers create suitable interventions.
Recommendations

- Encourage authoritative parenting
- Include a focus on fathers in parenting interventions, especially if CWD has an orthopedic condition
- Help male siblings develop empathy
- Encourage kindness in siblings of children with a variety of disabilities
Nursing

- Family Centered Care
- Individualize care
Thank you!

Comments and Questions?