

How parenting affects teen substance abuse psychology essay



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This paper explores multiple published articles that study and report on the results from research conducted on various family structures and parenting styles, and how they affect adolescent substance abuse. This paper explains the four different styles of parenting and the impact each of them has on an adolescent. The paper will also examine in specific detail the research conducted on the influence that different variables have on adolescent substance abuse. Such variables include, how family structure and parent-child relationships influence the adolescent. How the relationship between an adolescent and his or her father influences their drug use. As well as, how the warmth and control of parenting affect adolescent substance abuse.

Family Structure and Parenting Styles: How They Affect Adolescent Substance Abuse

Parent interventions and parenting styles have a major impact on whether their young teens will experiment, abuse, or become addicted to drugs. In order to positively influence their teen, adults must focus on three primary areas of parenting. First, they must set appropriate rules and guidelines for teen behavior outside of the family. Second, they must express and enforce appropriate rules with their adolescent. And third, parents must set strong boundaries by conveying education and limits about drug and alcohol use. (Dishion, 2004) There are multiple studies that have been conducted that show a correlation between parenting styles and adolescent drug use.

According to research on adolescence, parents can be proactive in their child's life by maintaining a close, healthy relationship with them. Research shows that family structure, parent-child relationships, and parental control all affect whether the teen uses alcohol, tobacco and illicit drugs. By staying

informed, and studying current research findings, parents will have the ability to employ techniques and parenting styles that will greatly reduce the chance that their child will abuse drugs.

Some potential causes of differences in parenting styles might include culture, personality, family size, parental background, socioeconomic status, educational level and religion. By understanding the different styles, and the impact they have on children, parents can choose what they think will prove to be the most beneficial for their children and family. There are four main parenting styles that are commonly studied and evaluated, they are authoritarian, authoritative permissive, and uninvolved. Authoritarian parents expect their children to follow many strict rules, and if they don't, they will be punished. These parents are considered to be obedience and status oriented, and expect their orders to be obeyed without explanation. Authoritative parents establish rules and guidelines that their kids are expected to follow, but at the same time, they are open to questions that their children might have. Authoritative parents want their kids to be self-regulated but cooperative, as well as assertive and socially responsible. A more lenient style of parenting is called permissive parenting. Permissive parents are more likely to nurture their child than discipline them, and they often act as their child's friend, rather than their parent. The fourth style of parenting is called uninvolved parenting. These parents typically fulfill their child's basic needs, but do not have much of an active role in their child's life. All of these parenting styles produce different affects on the child.

According to research conducted by Engels, Dekovis, & Meeus (2002), an authoritarian parenting style generally leads to children who are obedient

and proficient, but they have lower social competence and self-esteem, and are less happy overall. Authoritative parenting styles produce children who are happy, capable and successful. Permissive parenting results in children who are unhappy, have low self-regulation, and experience problems with authority. Children raised by uninvolved parents typically lack self-control, have self-esteem issues and are usually less competent than their peers. By understanding the parenting styles that are associated with high rates of adolescent drug abuse, intervention techniques can be targeted at the specific adolescents that are considered high risk. Through research and studies on youth populations, researchers can better understand the specific characteristics of family relationships that relate to substance abuse in teens.

Research conducted by Ledoux, S., Miller, P., Choquet, M., & Plant, M. (2001) studied how family structure and parent-child relationships impact teen drug use. The study was conducted in France and the United Kingdom, and included 2,641 subjects between 15 and 16 years old. The research included a questionnaire that included questions about the individual's use of alcohol, tobacco and illicit drugs. The other variables in the study included gender, family structure, relationships to the parents and parental control. Family structure was broken down into four categories: intact, restructured, single parent, and other. To determine the individual's relationship with each of their parents, two questions were asked, 'how satisfied are you usually with your relationship with your mother?' and the same was asked for father. Parental control was measured by asking 'do your parents know where you spend Saturday evenings?' All of the research was combined, after analysis,

researchers found that adolescents who lived in non-intact families were more likely to use alcohol, tobacco or illicit drugs, and poor or unhealthy relationships with parents could cause or contribute to adolescent drug use. By breaking down the variables that cause drug abuse, further research can be conducted on how to counteract the variables that produce negative effects.

Research conducted by the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse (CASA), found that the quality of a teenagers relationship with their father directly affects how likely it will be for the teen to use drugs or alcohol. CASA researchers found that children living in two-parent families who have a fair or poor relationship with their father have a 68 percent higher risk of smoking, drinking and using drugs than teens living in two-parent households. Teens living in a household headed by a single mother are 30 percent more likely to use a substance, compared to teens in two parent households. The study conducted by CASA also found that approximately 60 percent of teens between the ages of 12 and 17 are considered high risk for substance abuse. ' High risk' means that the teen has friends who use marijuana or drink regularly, they have a classmate or friend who used LSD, cocaine or heroin, they can buy marijuana quickly, or they expect to use an illegal drug in the future. 60% of teens between that age range turns into approximately 14 million adolescents. (Wylie, 1999) By knowing what the term ' high risk' is associated with, steps can be taken to change and eliminate the factors that put teens in danger of becoming substance abusers. Parents must educate themselves and their children about the

negative affects associated with drug use, and must enforce rules and control so their children do not get involved with drugs or alcohol.

Research has shown that parental warmth and control are very important factors in relation to adolescent drug use. A study was conducted on 128 post drug users that focused on parental warmth and control (cite article). The participants were asked to complete multiple parenting styles and drug use questionnaires. Results found that, compared to non-users, a greater proportion of drug users characterized the style of parenting that they were raised with as ' neglectful'. Results also showed that the individuals that considered their parents' style authoritative, had significantly lower lifetime consumption and drug use, compared to the individuals that described their parents as neglectful. Also, the individuals from authoritarian backgrounds had significantly smaller lifetime consumption of drugs compared to all other groups. (Montgomery & Craig, 2008) This research shows that parental control has a more significant impact on their children's drug use, when compared to parental warmth. In other words, parents that tend to be stricter, and have rules and high expectations, typically raise children that do not participate in high amounts of drug use. Also, authoritative parents who have expectations for their children, tend to raise children that do not participate in drug use as much as individuals whose parents were uninvolved in their lives.

A large amount of research shows that family influences have a great affect on adolescent drug use. However, additional research is needed to fully understand how parenting styles and family dynamics are related to adolescent drug use. The research and information that is currently available <https://assignbuster.com/how-parenting-affects-teen-substance-abuse-psychology-essay/>

may eventually produce positive benefits in terms of preventative intervention. Because we know that parents that are inactive in their children lives typically raise teens that tend to use substances more than others, we could form parent education programs to promote adolescent well being. The classes could teach parents how to set limits and controls for their children while still maintaining a warm and supportive relationship. By getting uninvolved parents to become more engaged in the lives of their children, and by showing permissive parents how to set more rules for their children, we may eventually see a decrease in adolescent drug use as a whole. It would be ideal to use this preventative method of therapy, however for the adolescents out there that are already dealing with a drug problem, there is a potential solution. Research conducted by Howard A. Liddle, of the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine, studied the differences between peer group drug treatment and family therapy. The results showed that individuals that participated in family therapy showed much higher reductions in the use of any substance, compared to the individuals that participated in peer group drug treatment. (Monti, 2009) This research shows that, not only do positive family relationships and parenting styles decrease the chances of teen drug abuse; family support is also the most successful tool when participating in drug therapy.

All of the research that has been discussed draws the same conclusion and supports the idea that family structure and parent-child interactions greatly influence whether or not an adolescent will participate in drug use. There are however, multiple variables that produce different outcomes in regards to an individual's experience. Not only do the dynamics of the whole family affect

the outcome, the teen's relationship with each parent affect the situation. The study conducted by (Ledoux et al., 2001), supports this idea, the research conducted by CASA also provides supporting evidence on the effects produced by individual parent relationships with the teen. Another variable that influences teen drug use is parental control. (Montgomery et al., 2008) research on control and warmth shows that parental control plays a large role on the adolescent's life. The study by (Ledoux et al., 2001) also illustrates how parental control contributes to the adolescent's outcome. Multiple studies that have been discussed prove that the teens whose parents are actively involved in their lives have lower rates of drug use. Overall, parent involvement and healthy family interactions have the most impact on whether teens will experiment, abuse, or become addicted to drugs.