

# Early infancy and childhood development essay sample

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Apart from genetics, a child's growth and development are influenced by family and the environment. The family, for example, determines the moral development of the child and language acquisition (Kagan, 1999, p. 164). The family also shapes the child's gender identity and the child's behavior in the future. Therefore, the parenting style adopted by parents is of great importance to growth and development. The environment, on the other hand, shapes a child's gender development, language and cognitive ability. The interaction between teachers and children in the early years of life, for example, determines literacy development.

The family plays an important role in the growth and development children right from infancy. Infants develop a strong emotional attachment with caregivers and parents. The emotional attachment is specific to particular person or persons, and it cuts across through space and time (Benson & Haith, 2010, p. 96). There are different forms of attachment, such as secure attachment and insecure attachment, and each form of attachment is shaped by parent-infant interaction especially within the first year. According to Mary Ainsworth, infants who experience secure attachments are more likely to grow into socially skilled and competent adults compared to infants who experience unsecure attachments (Fingerman, 2011, p. 37). This indicates that the parenting style matters in the development of infants and children.

There are four main forms of parenting. They include authoritarian parenting, authoritative parenting, uninvolved parenting and permissive parenting. In authoritarian children parenting, children have to follow the rules established by the parents (Steinberg, Vandell, & Bornstein, 2010, p. 273). This means

that failure to follow the rules set by parents can result into punishments. In authoritative parenting, on the other hand, children are expected to follow the rules, though the parents are democratic enough to allow mistakes and guide their children. Parents remain supportive and they aim to nurture their children instead of punishing them. Uninvolved parenting is the third style of parenting, and it is characterized by little communication between parents and their children and few expectations on the side of the child (Steinberg, Vandell, & Bornstein, 2010, p. 273). In this case, parents may take care of the basic needs of their children or neglect their responsibilities altogether. Lastly, permissive parenting involves giving few demands to the child. Similarly, parents place few expectations on their children.

Each of the parenting style discussed has an impact on the development of children. For example, research shows that authoritarian parenting leads to children who are very obedient, but with low self-esteem and social competence. Authoritative parenting, on the other hand, leads to children who have high levels of self-esteem and highly sociable. These qualities are, however, lacking in children brought up through uninvolved parenting. Children raised by uninvolved parents lack self-control and have low levels of self-esteem. Lastly, permissive parenting leads to children who do not respect authority and who lack self-regulation. In my opinion, authoritative style is the best because it moulds and supports children, which leads to the development of children with high levels of self-esteem and who are socially competent.

While parents and family influence the physical and social development of a child, early childhood education plays a crucial role in the development of

cognitive abilities of a child (Essa, 2013, p. 279). Early childhood education is particularly important because it determines a child's literacy development, memory and the ability to solve problems. These abilities are shaped in the ages of six to eight years. It is also the period when a child develops vocabulary as well as communication skills. Early childhood education also gives children a head start in their education life, and several abilities developed later in life can be traced to the training received in the early childhood days (Burger, 2010, p. 141).

In conclusion, it is indeed true that parents and family contribute to the social and physical development of children right from the infancy stage. This means that the parenting style adopted by parents has a big influence on the physical and social outcome of their children. Education, on the other hand, shapes the development of cognitive abilities in children.

## **References**

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