

# Parents vs. peers



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Parents vs. Peers Today there is a large number of research and discussions on the extent of influence on children by the parents and peer groups. It is true that the genes that children acquired from the biological parents have a definite impact on their behavior. However, it is also true that the environment in which children are brought up have a greater influence on the children than the genetic influence.

In a convention, Judith Rich Harris said that Parents do influence their children's behavior. But the influence is in context, specific to the home. When children go out, they leave behind the behavior they acquired at home. They cast it off like the dorky sweater their mother made them wear. The behavior of a child is both dependent on the internal genetic influence that he gained from his parents and the external influence that he has from his association with peers.

Modern developmentalists admit that children are born with distinctive characteristics that make certain developmental outcomes more likely. In fact, the word heredity is rarely used nowadays; it has been replaced by words like nature and genetic, which acknowledge children's genes without acknowledging their source. Children share 50% of their genes with each of their biological parents.

Also not proved is the proposition that children learn things from one relationship or in one context that they automatically carry with them to new ones. If parenting behaviors do have lasting effects, the effects are specific to the context in which the behaviors were experienced. Because children are destined to play out their adult lives in other contexts, what they learn in these other contexts will be more important in the long run (Harris, 2000).

Judith Rich Harris, in her book "The Nurture Assumption," is challenging the

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conventional wisdom of both Academic psychologists and parents alike: that parent have a large influence on how their children turn out. Harris challenges this wisdom. If one can combine her points with some knowledge about temperament, it is most likely this synthesis will help in explaining the role of parents in raising their children. She points out that trying to separate the effects of inheritance (genes) and the parents environmental effects is extremely difficult to do with any large degree of scientific validity. In reality, the effect of childhood environment on the development of the individual to mature adulthood is still mysterious and is not understood. Peer groups can have a large influence in behavior while the child is in that group. Children behave differently in the presence of parents and their peer group. They know what works with their parents, very likely wont work with their peers. And what works with their peers, very likely wont work with their parents. They easily and sensibly separate social context, and adjust their behavior accordingly. What children learn from their parents may or may not be useful with their peers, and what they learn from their peers, may or may not be useful with their parents (Keirse, N. D.).

Parent can definitely choose the social environment of their kids by determining the place they live, the schools they select to send their kids and the society they are in continuous touch with. Finally, it can be said that both parents and peer groups do have influence on the behavior of a child. However, the extent of influence varies in each case.

#### References

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