

Minority parents and child discipline



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Minority parents and child discipline: Parenting styles have always varied from one culture to another. And despite a degree of homogenization due to large-scale migrations in the 20th century, cultural roots of families continue to bear upon how children are raised. In the United States, for example, parents from minority ethnicities tend to hold their children to a different standard of discipline than their Caucasian counterparts. As researcher Lisa Fontes notes in her article that just as areas of emphasis vary between cultures so do modes and methods of punishment. There are differences in the way children are punished by African American/Southern parents compared to their Caucasian/New England counterparts. Such variations are seen in other minority groups like Hispanic Americans, Korean Americans, etc. Chinese and Indian American parents' methods and attitudes toward child discipline have particularly attracted comment and criticism. For example, in these communities, emphasis on academic excellence is very high. And parents accomplish this by imposing strict controls over her their children's personal, family and social lives. The children are seldom allowed to indulge in extracurricular activities, get any grade other than an A, and not master musical instruments at a young age. Behind this grand ambition for her children, there goes a lot of hard work from all involved. And it is due to this kind of strictly regimented, industrious and highly ambitious life-style imposed on their children that they were able to achieve so much success in such a short time. The parents are of the firm conviction that they are the best judges of what is good for their children and resolutely act to attain those goals. Hence what might come across as child abuse at first might actually be effective child rearing practice when seen in the larger context. The problems arise, when punishment comes in conflict with state and

federal laws for child protection. As Lisa Fontey notes, “ If the caretakers’ disciplinary methods constitute physical abuse as defined by state law and through the course of your professional duties you become aware of abuse or consider a child at risk, you are legally obliged to file a report with child protective services or the police. This holds true regardless of the family’s cultural background...” (Fontey, 2005, p. 4) In conclusion, it is safe to say that Authoritative parenting styles are generally better than other parenting styles. In the Authoritative type, parents are responsive to their children's wishes and interests while also demand high standards from them in return. A stricter style of parenting is the Authoritarian type, where parents expect a lot from their children while disregarding their children's own wants and wishes. A parenting style in which children assume greater power over their parents is the Permissive style. In this style, children get what they want and get away with most mischief. It is generally believed that the Authoritative parenting style is likely to produce emotionally balanced and well-disciplined children (irrespective of their cultural/ethnic backgrounds), as it banks on co-operation as opposed to skewered power relations between the two parties.

Work Cited: Fontes, L. A. (2005).. Working with Cultural Minority Parents on Issues of Physical Discipline & Abuse., New York: Guilford.