

Culture and child rearing essay



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Culture and Child Rearing Practices The purpose of this paper is to express the different ways culture affects child-rearing practices. Culture and child rearing are both essential in child development. Culture and ethnicity can have a deciding effect on the child-rearing techniques that families implement throughout the world. Differences such as methods of discipline, expectations regarding acceptance of responsibilities and transmission of religious instruction will vary among families. The paper includes interviews from three families from different backgrounds about child-rearing practices.

Culture is the customary beliefs, social forms, and material traits of a racial, religious, or social group(Robbins, 1997). Child rearing practices are ways in which children in a society are raised(Robbins, 1997). Regardless of their cultural orientation, parents play a significant role in helping their children become honorable and contributing members of society. They accomplish this by nurturing their children, engaging in problem solving with them, and modeling by example of culturally acceptable ways of living and solving problems.

A culturally evaluative theory called neo-Freudianism focuses on personal development in that it puts much importance on early childhood experiences being crucial to the development of the adult. The focus was that of socialization and cultural institutions. It is believed that the cause of adult personality stemmed from early child rearing techniques, but that these techniques were largely based on the influences of cultural institutions on the child rearing practices.

Child rearing patterns or parenting types have been categorized into three: Autocratic or Authoritarian, Democratic or Authoritative and laissez-faire or permissive (Mindel, 1998). Parents who predominantly rely on the autocratic child rearing lay much emphasis on getting immediate and long-range obedience from their children. The relationship that exists between such parents and their children is such that places value on controlling the child's behavior (Broude, 1994). Democratic parents on the other hand approach the act of child upbringing with some measures of flexibility.

Children from such homes are allowed considerable freedom with their discipline, and control altered to meet their need and not wishes. Closely related to the democratic type of child rearing is the laissez-faire. Parents that are in favor of this parental practice typically rely on reasoning and manipulation as against overt demonstration of power (Broude, 1994).

Children are recognized as individuals and need to be encouraged to become independent. The home or the family is the first social environment in which the child knows.

It is a unit of the larger social environment where the child learns about the norms and mores, and how best to behave in the larger society. From early childhood, children take in information about the roles and relationship of people and things in their environment. Consequently, adults teach children in the course of their daily interaction with them directly or indirectly. I believe that the religion and culture present in your environment will affect your personality, as children are very influential. Religions and cultures have commandments of sorts, which aim to help develop the child into a respectable member of their society.

As such, religion and culture can affect generosity, caring, principles, and much more. My religion is Christianity. My parents believed in order and discipline in the home. Members of my home were to behave and respect others or we would be punished. Three families from different backgrounds provided information on child-rearing practices implemented in their homes. The names of the families were changed to protect identity and privacy. The first family interviewed was an African American mother and father with three children. Their religion is Christianity. The children were ages three, six and ten.

The children are feed breakfast at home every morning before school by the mother. Dinner is served every evening at 6: 30pm. The children are to get ready for bed at 7: 30pm on weeknights. The children ride the evening bus to their grandparent's home because the parents are at work when school is dismissed. The mother and father expect the children to respect one another at all times and to be on their best behaviors at all times with not exceptions to this rule. The male children are to always have a belt on with shirts tucked in weather in school or at home.

The children are expected to complete all homework and chores before any playtime. Playtime normally consist of the children outside playing with the children next door. In their home, the six and ten year old was required to perform chores after school but before dinner. The children received punishment if the chores were not completed in a specific period.

Punishment usually included video games being taken away, no television, and no sleepovers with friends. The second family consisted of an African

American mother and father whose religion was Muslim. They have two children which are two boys age four and seven.

The man is considered the head of the family; to many a man, however, this is a poisoned chalice because with leadership comes responsibility.

Economic responsibility for maintaining the family falls squarely on the shoulders of the man, irrespective of whether his wife is earning money. It is expected that Muslim children treat their parents with kindness and respect their authority. Muslim parents are not loose disciplinarians, but they are advised that children should be treated according to their nature and in accordance with their level of understanding.

Muslims believe that children are born with a natural predisposition toward God that exists at birth in all human beings. As their children grew, parents molded and shaped the boys into their dominant beliefs and culture. The father explains that the religion requires them not to consume pork meat or products. The mother states she only purchases fish, turkey and chicken products. The seven-year-old boy states he has never eaten pork and does not plan on it. The mother and father are the primary caregivers for the children. The parents state the children are to conduct themselves in a respectable manner and respect adults and peers.

The children are expected to wear clothes that fit and that are not loose and hanging off them. The family also sets a specific time aside every evening before bed to pray together as a family. The family admits this is a very special worship time for them. The Third family consists of single Caucasian women who is pregnant with a child whose half-Caucasian and half African

American and she has a four year old daughter. The single mom states she is not with the father of the child but both parents will have an equal say in the rearing of the child.

The mother feeds her daughter breakfast every morning before driving her to school. The daughter started wearing uniforms this year to school. The mother states the daughter misses wearing regular clothes to school. The mother and daughter are excited about the birth of the new baby. The mother explains that both children will remain in public school and she will encourage both children to pursue college. The primary caregiver is the mother but she also explains that her parents will play a very important role as caregivers as well. The mother explains that the daughter needs some lessons in manners.

The mother states that she does not believe in spanking and she does not spank her daughter. The mother does not plan to spank the newborn and feels that any parent can get their point across to a child without physically spanking a child. She admits that her parents were lenient with her growing up as a child. The mother plans to be lenient with rearing the unborn child but feels the father of the child will enforce more discipline. Summary and Reflection Through my experiences with the families, I have learned that every family's child-rearing practices are affected differently by culture.

Some families tend to child-rear traditionally the way the parents grew up. Other families communicate and compromise about child-rearing techniques. All families encountered base the rearing techniques on morals, values and the best thing for the children. I recommend the teacher instruction need to

be individualized for each student, curriculum must be relevant to real life, and the teacher should model the behavior that he/she expects from the students to enable an effective learning community.

Cultural differences and classroom management go hand-in-hand in awareness. Knowing the cultures of students—their backgrounds, home experiences and prior schooling—plays directly into the many options educators have for managing their behavior in classrooms. To be most effective in classroom management, teachers must know and understand the cultural differences among their students. I learned that culture is very important and different between families. Each family revealed different ways of child rearing but they all had the same results in mind.

The families wanted to raise their children the way they had been raised and disciplined because morals and values that were learned. The families wished to raise the children using their cultural background so that the same morals and values were learned by the children. One family made chores lists for the children, which teaches discipline and responsibility. The children were to do their chores before a specific time or they were to face the consequences. The consequences were to have something they enjoyed doing denied or removed if they failed to complete the chores.

Visiting the families really gave me a better insight on how culturally different but similar families are from a different point of view. As an educator, I should appreciate and accommodate the similarities and differences among the students' cultures. Effective teachers of culturally diverse students should acknowledge both individual and cultural differences

and identify these differences in a positive manner. This positive identification creates a basis for the development of effective communication and effective instructional strategies for student learning.

Social skills such as respect, values and cross-cultural understanding should be modeled, taught, and reinforced by the teacher. References Broude, Gwen J. Marriage, Family, and Relationships: A Cross-Cultural Encyclopedia. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1994. Mindel, Charles H. , Robert W. Halberstein, & Roosevelt Wright , Jr. Ethnic Families in America: Patterns and Variations, 4th ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1998 Robbins, Lillian C. , The accuracy of parental recall of aspects of child development and of child rearing practices, The Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology, 1997