9

Relative Contributions of Families and Peers to Children's Social Development

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Families have traditionally been viewed as the major socialization agency for the development of children's social behavior. Under the influence of Freudian theory and subsequently Bowlby's fusion of psychoanalytic and ethological approaches, the mother–child relationship has remained a prominent cornerstone of children's social development. In recent decades, our views of the socialization process have changed in a variety of ways. First, our limited view of the mother–child dyad as central to the socialization process has been replaced by a recognition of the family as a social system in which fathers, siblings, and the marital relationship are all viewed as playing important roles in children's social development (Parke & Buriel, 1998). Second, it is increasingly recognized that socialization is a multifaceted process which includes a variety of influential agents beyond the family, such as extended families, adult mentors, formal and informal support systems, and children's peers and friends. Of particular interest is the role of families and peers in the socialization matrix. Several views concerning the relative importance of family and peers as well as the degree of linkage between these two social systems have been suggested over the last several decades. As Hartup (1979) has noted in his classic formulation, children's relationships with peers are viewed as either independent of family relationships or interdependent social systems. Those who take the "independent" view argue that peer and family systems develop separately and each perform unique functions in the socialization process (e.g., Harlow, 1958). More recently some writers (e.g., Harris, 1995, 1998, 2000) have extended the independence argument and proposed that parents have little influence on children's behavior beyond a biological or genetic contribution. Alternatively, Harris argues that the peer group is largely responsible for socialization of children's social behavior.

(See the recent exchange between Vandell (2000) and Harris (2000) for more detail on the current status of the issue.)

In contrast to the independence view of the nature of family and peer relationships, others argue that family and peer systems mutually influence each other in the course of childhood socialization. Conceptualization of the nature of the linkage has varied. Historically, family and peer systems have been viewed as conflictful, with the framing of the family–peer linkage issue in terms of "parents versus peers" (Youniss & Smollar, 1985). Evidence in support of this view has been limited and instead considerable support for continuity between parental values and attitudes largely discredited this viewpoint (Douvan & Adelson, 1966). Instead, most recent accounts and the perspective which guides this chapter suggest that families and peers both play important roles in children's social development and recognize the interdependence between these two social systems. It is further assumed that the nature of family–peer relationships varies across development periods as well as across different family types and ecological, historical, and cultural contexts. Finally, recent advances in this area in uncovering the mechanisms or processes by which those two systems are linked will be briefly examined. Our goal is to provide a contemporary and balanced perspective on the roles played by both family and peers in children's social development.

Genes versus Parents and Peers: The Wrong Question

Several writers have downplayed the influence of parents on children's social development (Harris, 1995, 1998, 2000; Rowe, 1994; Scarr, 1992) and instead have argued that heredity accounts for a sizeable amount of the variance in children's development. Indeed, behavior geneticists have provided a much-needed corrective to the earlier and simplistic view that the environment alone, including parents and peers were the major influence on social development. At the same time, the finding of behavior genetics that "heredity rarely accounts for as much as 50% of the variation among individuals in a particular population" (Collins, Maccoby, Steinberg, Hetherington, & Bornstein, 2000, p. 228) leaves half of the variance due to environmental effects or gene X environment interactions. Ironically, our best evidence to date that the environment matters comes from behavior genetic studies. However, there are major problems with the additive approach which assumes that genetic and environmental influences operate independently but together account for the variance in outcomes. As Collins et al. (2000) note, in their critique of research on the role of nature versus nurture in our studies of socialization, recent models have adopted a variety of more sophisticated assumptions and designs to reflect the reality that "the expression of heritable traits depends strongly on experience, including specific parental behaviors, as well as predispositions and age-related factors in the child" (Collins et al., 2000, p. 228). This contemporary look in behavior genetics research is leading to new designs which permit the estimation of gene X environment effects in which the operation of genetic predispositions are conditional on the type of environment, including parenting, to which the child is exposed (Reiss, Neiderhiser, Hetherington, & Plomin, 2000).

Studies of the role of temperament, a genetically determined individual difference, in

children's development have illustrated the conditional nature of genetically based predispositions. While a difficult temperament in infancy is sometimes associated with the development of insecure infant–mother attachment, this link is most evident when social support available to the mothers is limited (Crockenberg, 1981). When maternal social support was high, there were no differences in the quality of the infant–mother attachment relationship for difficult and easy infants. Since this early study, evidence has mounted in support of this interactive view of temperament. For example, several researchers have found that difficult temperament predicts long-term behavior outcomes, such as externalizing problems; however, additional parental influences are evident beyond the effects of temperament (Bates, Pettit, & Dodge, 1995). Other studies have found moderating effects of parenting on temperament–behavior links (Bates, Pettit, Dodge, & Ridge, 1998; Rothbart & Bates, 1998). Moreover, as Vandell (2000) has recently argued, difference in parental treatment is "not driven solely by children's genetic differences . . . Children in the same family can have very different experiences as a function of changes in family circumstances related to parents employment, divorce, relocations, illness, separation, and death" (p. 702). These arguments are consistent with the conditional view of parenting, and underscore the importance of environmental factors as moderators of the interplay between genetic factors and parenting. In sum, parenting remains an important influence on children's social development (Parke & Buriel, 1998), although it is increasingly recognized that genetic factors interact with parenting styles to achieve these effects (Hart, 1999; Vandell, 2000).

Just as parents remain important agents of socialization, ample evidence (see Rubin, Bukowski, & Parker, 1998) suggests that peers play an important role in social development – after controlling for parental effects. A variety of social and academic outcomes are forecast by the quality of children's peer relationships in early childhood (Parker & Asher, 1987). Moreover in the study of social relationships distinctions have often been made among different relationship units of analysis, including dyads and groups. It is assumed that friendship based on a reciprocal relationship between two individuals makes a distinctive and unique contribution to children's social adaptation, which is different from measures of peer-group acceptance or experience in peer-group contexts. Recent efforts to limit peer influence to group-level effects (Harris, 1995, 2000) are inconsistent with the accumulating body of evidence which demonstrates that friendships have important influences on children's social adaptation over time (Hartup & Stevens, 1997; Newcomb & Bagwell, 1995). Moreover, different types of peer relationships, such as companions, friends, and teammates serve different functions in development (Krappman, 1992; Vandell, 2000) a view that stands in sharp contrast to Harris (1995, 2000) who argues that peer-group level experience is the major socialization influence. Just as parenting interacts with genetic/biological variables, a similar argument can be made in the case of peers (Vandell, 2000). Recent evidence suggests that the choices of particular peers, and activities and the timing of entry into these activities are likely to be biologically as well as socially mediated. As Vandell (2000) recently noted, interpretation of the direction of effects in these studies is difficult to establish. Indeed much of the research on the peer group as a central socialization force "suffers from the same challenges of gene–environment correlations that confront parenting researchers. Children actively select some peer groups and not others on the basis of their interests and proclivities" (Vandell, 2000, p. 704). Indeed the move toward

longitudinal and experimental studies has been motivated, in part, by attempts to clarify the nature of these gene–environment correlations.

An example will illustrate this interplay between genetically influenced processes and social variables in shaping children's social development and recent attempts to disentangle gene–environment relationships. Just as the parent research has shown, a conditional model that implicates both environmental and biological/genetic influences emerges as the best account of the available data. Infants with difficult temperament are more likely to be rejected by peers (Bates, Bayles, Bennett, Ridge, & Brown, 1991), while inhibited infants are more likely to be socially withdrawn in early and middle childhood (Calkins & Fox, 1992). In sum, in the case of both parents and peers, the impact of these socializing agents are best understood by recognizing their interplay with biological/genetic determined child characteristics.

Parents versus Peers or Parents and Peers

Just as genetic factors do not operate alone, our view is that parents and peers operate together in the socialization process. In contrast to Harris (1995, 1998, 2000) who argues that the peer group is the major environmental socializing force in children's development, and parents play a minor role in this process, we argue that parents and a variety of types of peer relationships, including friendships, matter in the socialization process. Second, rather than peers functioning independently of parents, we argue that parents play a major role in shaping the timing of entry into peer contexts, the nature and frequency of peer contacts and the quality of peer activities. Moreover, the links between these two systems is transactional with parents affecting their children's peer contacts and experiences, which in turn, modify parent–child relationships, which subsequently further modify peer relationships (Hart, Olsen, Robinson, & Mandleco, 1997).

Parental Influence on Children's Peer Relationships: A Tripartite Model

There are many ways in which parents have been found to influence their children's relationships with peers. We propose that there are three different paths that lead to variations in children's peer relationships. These three paths include parent–child interaction, parents' direct advice concerning peer relationships, and parents' regulation of children's peer activities and access to peers.

Parent–child interaction and the parent–child relationship

Parent–child interaction has a long history in the area of developmental psychology. Research in this area is based on the notion that face-to-face interactions between children

and parents may afford children the opportunity to learn social skills that are necessary for successful peer relationships (see Parke & O'Neil, 1997, for a fuller description). This research has shown that controlling parent interactional styles are related to negative social outcomes for children and that warm interactional styles are related to positive social outcomes. Recent studies found that children of mothers who interact more positively or are more responsive and engaging with their children were more socially accepted by peers (Harrist, Pettit, Dodge, & Bates, 1994; Hart, Ladd, & Burleson, 1990; Putallaz, 1987). Pettit and Harrist (1993) observed positive and negative maternal interactional styles during a family meal and found positive peer outcomes for the children whose mothers were more sensitive and negative peer outcomes whose mothers were more intrusive. Similarly, parents who exhibit negative affect, who are over-controlling, and who are more distant in their interactions have children that are less accepted by peers or socially skilled (e.g., Carson & Parke, 1996; Hart, DeWolf, & Burts, 1992; McDowell & Parke, 2000; Olsen et al., in press).

Studies of child–parent attachment have provided evidence that the quality of attachment is linked with the quality of children's peer relationships. When a child is provided with sensitive and contingently responsive caregiving from his/her primary caregivers in infancy a secure attachment is formed within a relationship between infant and caregiver (Sroufe, Carlson, & Shulman, 1993), which leads to the child being more positive and competent in later peer relationships.

As these studies underscore, the nature of parent–child interactional history and the parent–child relationship are linked to variations in the quality of peer relationships – further evidence of the interdependence of these two social systems. Moreover, subsequent outcomes, which have often been attributed to peer influences, clearly have their origins in early parenting practices and family-based relationships. In fact, disentangling the interplay between these two systems may be a false goal, since in reality the two systems mutually influence each other across development and operate together in accounting for socialization outcomes.

Research in this area has moved beyond the description of links between the two domains. In the most recent stage, the focus has been on the processes mediating the relations between parent–child interactions and/or relationships and peer outcomes. A variety of processes have been proposed including affect management skills (e.g., emotional encoding/decoding; emotional understanding; emotional regulation), attention regulatory mechanisms, and cognitive representational models.

Children learn more than specific affective expressions, such as anger or sadness or joy, in the family. They learn a cluster of processes associated with the understanding and regulation of affective displays, which we term "affect management skills" (Parke, Cassidy, Burks, Carson, & Boyum, 1992). It is assumed that these skills are acquired during the course of parent–child interaction, and are available to the child for use in other relationships. Moreover, it is assumed that these skills play a mediating role between family and peer relationships.

Evidence suggests that children's emotional encoding and decoding skills (see Hubbard & Coie, 1994, for review) are related to their social competence with peers. Other evidence suggests that children's emotional understanding (e.g., causes of emotion; appropriate reaction to emotions) is also related to peer competence (Cassidy, Parke, Butovsky, &

Braungart, 1992; Denham, 1998). It is assumed that these skills are acquired in the course of parent–child play. Through physically playful interaction with their parents, especially fathers, children may be learning how to use emotional signals to regulate the social behavior of others.

Emotional regulation has also been suggested as a potential link between family and peer contexts. For example, parental comforting of children when they experience negative emotion has been linked with constructive anger reactions (Eisenberg & Fabes, 1994). Several studies have suggested that parental willingness to discuss emotions with their children is related to children's awareness and understanding of others' emotions (Denham, 1998; Dunn & Brown, 1994; Gottman, Katz, & Hooven, 1997).

In concert with emotion regulation, attentional regulatory processes have come to be viewed as an additional mechanism through which familial socialization experiences might influence the development of children's social competence. These processes include the ability to attend to relevant cues, to sustain attention, to refocus attention through such processes as cognitive distraction and cognitive restructuring, and other efforts to reduce the level of emotional arousal (Denham, 1998). Attentional processes are thought to organize experience and to play a central role in cognitive and social development beginning early in infancy (Rothbart & Bates, 1998). Thus, Wilson (1999) aptly considers attention regulatory processes as a "shuttle" linking emotion regulation and social cognitive processes because attentional processes organize both cognitive and emotional responses, and thus, influence the socialization of relationship competence. In support of direct influences, Eisenberg, Fabes, Bernzweig, Karbon, Poulin, and Hanish (1993) found that children who were low in attentional regulation were also low in social competence.

A third mechanism has been championed by both attachment and social processing theorists namely cognitive representational models of social relationships (see Parke & O'Neil, 2000 and Sroufe & Fleeson, 1986, for reviews). According to attachment theorists the early experience with the parent is incorporated into the child's internal working models of the self, the parent, and the parent–child relationship, and these models are carried forward into the individual's social representations and behavior in subsequent interpersonal settings, including peer contexts (Ainsworth, 1989; Sroufe & Fleeson, 1986). Indeed, attachment is related to interpersonal cognition or representations that are applied to challenges in peer relationships (e.g., Cassidy, Kirsh, Scolton, & Parke, 1996; Rabiner, Keane, & MacKinnon-Lewis, 1993; Suess, 1987). Suess (1987) found that insecurely attached children displayed more unrealistic or hostile/negative biases in judging intentions of children involved in hypothetical mishaps with peers. Cassidy et al. (1996) found that greater perceived rejection by both mothers and fathers was associated with greater perceived hostile intent by peers. These studies provide evidence that the quality of attachment may have direct or indirect influences on later mental representations with respect to peers (see also McDowell, Parke, & Spitzer, in press).

Parent as advisor, instructor, and consultant

Parents' direct advice concerning children's peer relationships represents a second path of influence. It is assumed that parents influence children's peer relationships by providing

direct instruction about the appropriate ways of maintaining social relationships. Work in this area has indicated that different qualities of parental advice giving are related to variations in children's social competence. For example, young children have been found to play more cooperatively and exhibit more turn taking when an adult is facilitating than when playing alone (Bhavnagri & Parke, 1991). Similarly, Finnie and Russell (1988) examined the types of advice mothers gave during their children's attempts at group entry. Children of mothers who facilitated preschoolers' entry into a play situation by use of more group-oriented advice strategies were more socially competent. When examining mothers' advice to hypothetical vignettes, Finnie and Russell (1988) found that more skillful responses (more rule-oriented and positive) were related to children being more socially accepted (see also Russell & Finnie, 1990). Mize, Pettit, Laird, and Lindsey (1993) found that children whose mothers offered more positive solutions to peer dilemmas were rated as more socially competent by teachers. Furthermore, these researchers found mothers' explicit advice giving predicted social competence more than simply discussing peer situations.

While prior work with younger children has generally found positive relations between both positive style and clear and explicit content of advice giving, several theorists (Ladd, 1992; Parke, Burks, Carson, Neville, & Boyum, 1994) suggest that the impact of advice giving may change across development. As children develop a future orientation, parents are likely to try to keep their children from being influenced by peers by talking to them about the future consequences of their behavior (Mounts, 2000). In the early years of development, parents may use advice giving as a socializing tactic to help children acquire the skills necessary for adequate social adaptation to peers. However, both parents and children may regard explicit parental advice as less necessary and/or less appropriate as children develop adequate social skills. Instead, by middle childhood, provision of advice would be expected to be used by parents for remediational goals in which the advice giving would be highest in the case of poor socially functioning children. Work in our own lab has supported this notion. Specifically, when parents offered more advice and more specific advice about peer dilemmas, children were rated as less positive and more negative by teachers and peers (McDowell, Parke, & Wang, in press).

There is a shift in recent research toward an integrated approach to these topics. As Grusec and Goodnow (1994) suggest, both style and content need to be considered together in determining the impact of parental advice giving on children's peer outcomes. The combined impact of these two aspects of parental advice giving is beginning to achieve recognition. In their study of 3–5-year-old children, Mize and Pettit (1997) found that maternal information giving and guidance (content) predicted over and above mothers' warmth and responsiveness (style) to children's peer acceptance (as rated by teachers) during a play interaction context. In our own work we have found similar results showing that the style and content of parental advice play nonoverlapping roles in children's peer relationships (McDowell, Parke, & Wang, in press). This second pathway through which parents influence children's peer relationships provides further evidence in support of our argument that family and peer systems are interdependent.

Beyond parent–child interaction and advice giving: Parents as social managers and social supervisors

Parents influence their children's social relationships not only through their direct interactions with their children. They also function as managers of their children's social lives (Hartup, 1979; Parke, 1978) and serve as regulators of opportunities for social contact with extra-familial social partners. Although peer influence increases as children develop (Rubin et al., 1998), parents continue to play an important regulatory role as gatekeeper and monitor of children's social choices and social contacts throughout middle childhood and into adolescence. This view stands in marked contrast to some claims (Harris, 1998) that parental influence over peer-group activities does not extend beyond preadolescence.

Parental monitoring.   One way in which parents can affect their children's social relationships is through monitoring of their children's social activities. This form of management is particularly evident as children move into middle childhood and later is associated with the relative shift in importance of family and peers as sources of influence on social relationships. Monitoring refers to a range of activities, including the supervision of children's choice of social settings, activities, and friends. Parents of delinquent and antisocial children engaged in less monitoring and supervision of their children's activities, and less control of their sons' choice of friends, than parents of nondelinquent children (Patterson & Stouthamer-Loeber, 1984).

It is unlikely that parental discipline, interaction, and monitoring are independent. In support of this view, Dishion (1990) found that *both* inconsistent, negative, and punitive discipline and low parental supervision and monitoring were related to emergence of antisocial behavior, which, in turn, was linked with rejection by peers. Similarly, Steinberg (1986) found that children in grades 6 to 9, especially girls who are on their own after school, are more susceptible to peer pressure to engage in antisocial activity (e.g., vandalism, cheating, stealing) than are their adult-supervised peers. In addition, children of parents who were high in their use of authoritative parenting practices were less susceptible to peer pressure in the absence of monitoring, in nonsupervised contexts. Developmental shifts may be important, because younger children are less likely to be left unsupervised than older children; moreover, it is likely that direct supervision is more common among younger children, whereas distal supervision is more evident among older children. Finally, recent work (O'Neil, Parke, & McDowell, 2001) suggests that monitoring and limitation of children's activities are, in part, determined by parental perceptions of neighborhood quality. When parents perceive the neighborhood to be of poor quality, they increase their level of supervision and limit their children's activities which, in turn, leads to higher social competence. This suggests a new direction for future research, namely the determinants of different levels of parental monitoring and supervision.

Play rules.   Rarely have researchers explored the relation between play rules for children and children's peer relationships. Simpkins and Parke (in press) explored the relations between the number of parental play rules and sixth-grade children's loneliness, depression, and friendship quality. Boys whose parents had fewer play rules reported lower levels

of depression and more conflict in their best friendship. Boys' loneliness and positive qualities in their best friendships was not significantly predicted by paternal play rules, nor were girls' outcomes significantly correlated with the number of parental play rules (see also Furstenberg, Cook, Eccles, Elder, & Sameroff, 1999).

Parents as social mediators of social contact.   Parents manage children's peer relationships by arranging for their children to interact with peers. Children's contact with peers after school can occur through informal play contacts with children or formal after-school activities (e.g., team sports). Informal contacts occur when parents and/or children arrange time to play with peers outside of school. During these contacts, children can practice and learn new social skills and behaviors with peers. This also provides children with a nonschool context in which to form and develop peer relationships. Parents who initiated at least one contact had children with a larger range of playmates and more companions with whom they had frequent contact (Kerns, Cole, & Andrews, 1998; Ladd & Golter, 1988; Ladd & Hart, 1992). In addition, boys were more liked and less rejected by peers if parents initiated at least one informal play contact (Ladd & Golter, 1988). Furthermore, parents who initiated a larger number of play contacts had children who had higher prosocial behavior and spent less time exhibiting nonsocial behavior in school (Ladd & Hart, 1992).

As with informal play contacts, children can spend their time after school with peers during formal activities. Bryant (1985) found that 10 year olds enrolled in formal activities were more likely to have better perspective-taking skills, which are helpful in children's peer relationships. Similarly, Pettit, Laird, Bates, and Dodge (1997) examined the relations between adult-supervised activities (e.g., music lessons, church, scouts, and youth groups) in first and third grade and children's peer relationships in sixth grade. Girls' activities in first grade were curvilinearly related to their grade point average (GPA) in sixth grade. Further, girls' activities during third grade were related curvilinearly to sixth-grade externalizing behaviors. These curvilinear patterns for girls indicated that an average number of activities was related to a higher GPA and fewer externalizing behaviors while a low or high number of activities was related to poorer outcomes. Boys' activities in first grade were not significantly related to sixth-grade outcomes. In third grade, boys with more activities showed more externalizing behaviors in sixth grade.

Parents' social networks as a source of potential peer contacts for children.   Cochran and Brassard (1979) have proposed that parents' social networks can influence children's cognitive and social development. Parents' networks may influence children's social adjustment by providing opportunities for social interaction with the children of their parents' network members. Children's contact with peers would be facilitated by the presence of potential play partners among the offspring of parents' network members. Cochran and his colleagues (Cochran, Larner, Riley, Gunnarson, & Henderson., 1990) have provided support for the overlap between parent and child social networks. They found that 30% to 44% of 6-year-old children's social networks were also included in the parents' networks.

The overlap between parents' and children's networks is also a form of social integration (Coleman & Hoffer, 1987). With high social integration or social capital (Coleman, 1988), parents' goals for their children's development or management of their behavior can be carried out through parents' network members. Thus, parents who have larger networks

have more adults that can help their children's development through several pathways. First, parents and children have more social support. Second, parents are better able to control or regulate problem behavior by having other parents guide their children's behavior when they are not present. Third, other parents can encourage prosocial behavior and parents' values when they are not present. Another way these two networks may be linked was proposed by Coleman (1990), who argued that when both parents and their children are acquainted with other parents and their children, they form network closure. According to Coleman, when network closure exists, there are likely to be more shared values and more social control over their offspring, which, in turn, would be related to better social outcomes. Darling, Steinberg, Gringlas, and Dornbusch (1995) found that social integration (as indexed by network closure) and value consensus were related to adolescent social and academic outcomes. Specifically, adolescents who reported high degrees of contact among their parents, friends, and their friends' parents, as well as high levels of interaction with nonfamily adults, were less deviant and higher in academic achievement than their peers who were less socially integrated.

Other studies suggest that the quality of adult social networks relates to children's social behavior (e.g., Melson, Ladd, & Hsu, 1993; Uhlendorff, 2000). In an Australian study, Homel, Burns, and Goodnow (1987) found positive relations between the number of "dependable" friends that parents report and 11-year-old children's self-rated happiness, the number of regular playmates, and maternal ratings of children's social skills. Recently, Simpkins, O'Neil, Lee, Parke, and Wang (under review) extended this work by showing a relation between parents' enjoyment of friends in their network and peer ratings of social competence. The more parents enjoyed their friends, the less the child was disliked and perceived as aggressive by peers. Moreover, the more contact that parents had with relatives, the less disliked children were by their peers. Finally, these investigators found that maternal and paternal social networks have distinctive links to children's social relationships. Fathers who rated their networks as less enjoyable had children who were more aggressive and more disliked by peers, whereas the less contact that mothers had with their friends, the higher teachers rated their children on avoidance of interaction with other children.

Finally the quality of the relationship that adults develop with friends in their social network is an important correlate of their children's friendship quality, Doyle and Markiewicz (1996) found that mothers who reported having supportive friends had children who experienced more closeness with their best friend. Or, if mothers felt less secure about their best friendship or rated their friends as interesting, their own children were more likely to have a best friend. The findings concerning the links between lack of mothers' security about their friendships is consistent with earlier work on maternal recollections of their childhood peer experiences. In this work, Putallaz, Costanzo, and Smith (1991) found that mothers who had anxious peer relations as children had children who were more socially competent, which supports a compensatory model of parenting. More recently, Simpkins and Parke (2001) found that the quality of both maternal and paternal friendships was related to children's friendship quality. However, the quality of the parents' best friendship was a better predictor of daughters' friendships, while both the quality of the parents' best friendship and breadth of their social network were predictive of sons' friendships. As these studies illustrate, the quality and scope of adult friendships

and social networks are important correlates not just of children's peer competence but of their friendship qualities as well. Finally, these findings suggest that the parental correlates of dyadic friendship qualities may, in fact, be different than the correlates of sociometric studies or other measures of peer-group experience.

In sum, parents serve as regulators of children's peer interactions and relationships. Peers are influential in children's development but some of the variance in outcomes is clearly the product of earlier and concurrent parental managerial strategies.

The Interplay Across Pathways

It is critical to remember that these three sets of parental strategies do not operate separately (Parke & O'Neil, 2000). The work of Dishion, Poulin, and Skaggs, (2000) illustrates the ways in which these separate parental strategies (i.e., parental childrearing practices, parental management) often operate together. In addition, this work illustrates how family factors influence children's behavior, which over development leads to different peer-group choices. Clearly, the nature of family–peer linkages needs to be considered from a developmental perspective. Children who associate with antisocial peers are more likely to engage in antisocial behavior; while it is common to blame the peer group for this increased deviant activity, the Patterson et al. (1989) research suggests that earlier family conditions modify the likelihood of associating with deviant peers. Poor monitoring as well as coercive/authoritarian childrearing practices in early childhood lead to aggressive behavior and poor school performance in middle childhood. In adolescence when there is more autonomy in the choice of peers, youth from these dysfunctional homes are more likely to choose antisocial peers, which, in turn, increases the rate of deviant activity. "Even when selection effects are controlled, much of what appears to be peer influence is actually the end result of familial influence at an earlier point in the child's development" (Collins et al., 2000, p. 228).

Marital Conflict and Children's Social Relationships

The relationship between the marital relationships and children's peer competence has a very recent history in the social development literature. Two perspectives are found: a direct and indirect effects models of the relations between marital conflict and children's peer relationships.

Marital discord can have an indirect influence on children's adjustment through changes in the quality of parenting (Fauber & Long, 1991). Affective changes in the quality of the parent–child relationship, lack of emotional availability, and adoption of less optimal parenting styles have been implicated as mechanisms through which marital discord disrupts parenting processes. Several studies (Cowan, Cowan, Schulz, & Heming, 1994; Katz & Kahen, 1993) have found that marital conflict is linked with poor parenting, which, in turn, is related to poor social adjustment on the children. Other work has focused on the

specific processes by which the marital relationship itself directly influences children's immediate functioning and long-term adjustment. More frequent interparental conflict and more intense or violent forms of conflict are not only particularly disturbing to children but are also associated with externalizing and internalizing problems. Grych, Seid, and Fincham (1992), for example, found that children who were exposed to an audiotaped analog of marital interaction responded with distress, shame, and self-blame to intensely angry adult exchanges. Conflict which was child-related in content was more likely than conflict involving other content to be associated with behavior problems in children (Grych & Fincham, 1993). Exposure to unresolved conflict, has been found to be associated with negative affect and poor coping responses in children (Cummings, Ballard, El-Sheikh, & Lake, 1991). In addition, Katz and Gottman (1993) found that couples who exhibited a hostile style of resolving conflict had children who tended to be described by teachers as exhibiting antisocial characteristics. When husbands were angry and emotionally distant while resolving marital conflict, children were described by teachers as anxious and socially withdrawn. Finally, children from divorced and remarried families are more likely to experience internalizing and externalizing problems and difficulties with peers (Amato & Keith, 1991 Hetherington, Bridges, & Insabella, 1998).

Conflict is inevitable in most parental relationships and is not detrimental to children's functioning under all circumstances. Disagreements that are extremely intense and involve threat to the child are likely to be more disturbing to the child. When conflict is expressed constructively, is moderate in degree, is expressed in the context of a warm and supportive family environment, and shows evidence of resolution, children may learn valuable lessons regarding how to negotiate conflict and resolve disagreements (Davies & Cummings, 1994).

Siblings as a Socialization Context for Peer Relationships

Children's experiences with siblings provide a context in which interaction patterns and social understanding skills may generalize to relationships with other children (McCoy, Brody, & Stoneman, 1994). According to Stocker and Dunn (1990), interactions with siblings provide a setting in which children "develop social understanding skills which may enable them to form particularly close relationships with a child of their choice, a close friend." Unfortunately, a somewhat inconsistent picture of the connections between children's patterns of interacting with siblings and patterns of interacting with peers is evident (see Parke & O'Neil, 1997, for a review of this work). There is modest evidence of a straightforward "carry-over" of interaction styles between children's relationships with siblings and peers. Hetherington (1988) found that when relationships with their siblings were described as hostile and alienated as opposed to warm and compassionate, children had poorer peer relationships and other behavior problems. Others report little evidence of a carry-over effect between siblings and peers. Abramovitch, Corter, Pepler, and Stanhope (1986), found little evidence that patterns of sibling interaction were related to the interaction styles of children with a friend. Older siblings are more likely to assume dominant roles such as managers of activities and teachers during the course of their interactions with siblings; whereas, the same children were more likely to adopt an equalitarian style during

interactions with friends.

Finally, the sibling relationship may play a role in compensating for other problematic relationships by providing an alternative context for experiencing satisfying social relationships and protecting children from the development of adjustment difficulties. East and Rook (1992) found that children who were socially isolated in their peer relationships were buffered from adjustment problems when they reported positive relationships with a favorite sibling.

Although our theories have emphasized the carry-over from sibling relationships to peer relationships, the direction of influence from peers to family is evident as well. Kramer and Gottman (1992) examined the role that positive relationships with peers plays in children's adaptation to the birth of a new sibling. They found that children who displayed a more positive interaction style with a best friend and who were better able to manage conflict and negative affect, behaved more positively toward their new sibling at both 6 months and 14 months.

Factors Altering the Relative Impact of Family and Peer Systems

A variety of moderators of the relative impact of families and peers on children's social adaptation have been identified, including social class and culture.

Social class, poverty, and job loss

Families who come from impoverished socio-economic backgrounds are more likely to experience a number of stressors, which, in turn, could affect their children's social relationships with peers. In addition to economic stressors, low-income families are more likely to experience such stressful events as medical problems, overcrowding in the home or a large family size, parental psychopathology, parental criminality and/or imprisonment, marital discord, and divorce (Duncan, Brooks-Gunn, & Klebanov, 1994; Hetherington, Bridges, & Insabella, 1998). Some have proposed that having any one of these stressors may not put a child at great risk for developing adjustment problems, but instead, it is the accumulation of many of such stressors that increases the likelihood of maladjustment (Rutter, 1987; Sameroff, Bartko, Baldwin, Baldwin, & Seifer, 1998). Shaw and Emery (1988) found that the number of family-level stressors a child had experienced was related negatively to the child's perceived social competence.

Poverty has its effect on children adjustment through both indirect and direct pathways. The link between family stressors and child adjustment may be mediated indirectly by parental behavior. Acute stress has been found to be associated with maternal depression which is related to increasingly poor discipline, which, in turn, is related to increases in child deviancy, including poor peer relations (Conger, Patterson, & Ge, 1995). Other researchers have investigated the direct linkage between social disadvantage and child outcomes. Patterson, Vaden, Griesler, and Kupersmidt (1991) have found that children from low-income homes have fewer friendships than children from middle-income homes both

in and out of school. The largest difference between low-income and middle-income children was for friendship activities in the home. Children from poor families may have homes that are not well equipped for children and their playmates and parents may not encourage their children to bring friends home. Furthermore, these low-income children were also more likely to experience social isolation. Thus, economic disadvantage may decrease their opportunities for peer companionship and hamper their opportunities for learning many of the social skills necessary to maintain positive peer relations.

Poverty is not the only route through which children and families are affected by economic factors. Even economically viable families suffer unemployment, and employment instability, which leads to financial stress. Economic hardship is often associated with subjective feeling of stress on the part of parents, which in turn, has been found to be associated with increased depression (Brody & Flor, 1997; Conger & Elder, 1994) and decreased self-esteem (Brody & Flor, 1997). Stressed and depressed parents are more hostile and tense and less warm and nurturant (Brody & Flor, 1997; Conger & Elder, 1994), and less likely to follow regular family routines (Brody & Flor, 1997). Disruptions in parenting can increase children's adjustment problems including difficulties in peer relations, such as fewer close friendships and less perceived support from friends (Conger, Patterson, & Ge, 1995).

Cultural differences in family and peer influence

An issue that has generated considerable interest is the variability in children's development across cultures as well as between and within cultural subgroups within the same country. Two issues are of interest, namely the relative influence of parents and peers in different cultures and the nature of family–peer linkages across cultures. The relative impact of parents and peers varies across cultures. In a classic study of Russian and American children, Bronfenbrenner (1970) found that Russian children were more likely to follow parental rules when with their peers than American children who exhibited a greater tendency to deviate from parental rules when with their peers. More recently, Chen, Greenberger, Lester, Dong, and Guo (1998) found that peer influences were stronger correlates of misconduct among European and Chinese Americans than among Chinese and Taiwanese adolescents.

In spite of overall differences in the relative contribution of peers and families to children's social outcomes, numerous studies report that the nature of the parental and peer correlates of children's social competence are similar. In the Chen et al. (1998) study for example, family relationships (parent–offspring conflict, parental warmth, and parental monitoring) as well as peer sanctions (peer approval/disapproval of misconduct) were related to child misconduct in similar ways across European and Chinese American and Chinese groups.

Others have reported similar relations between parental practices and children's peer relationships. In a study based in China, Chen and Rubin (1994) reported that authoritarian parenting and punitive disciplinary practices were linked with childhood aggression and peer rejection; on the other hand, parental warmth and authoritative parenting predicted social competence, which, in turn, predicted peer acceptance. However, as Chen,

Rubin, and Li (1994) found, the correlates of peer acceptance among Chinese children shift across development. While shyness is positively correlated with peer acceptance among 8–10 year olds, this same characteristic is associated with rejection when displayed by adolescents (Chen, Rubin, Li, & Li, 1999). Other work suggests that the domains in which behavior is exhibited is also important to understanding cross-cultural differences. Chinese-Canadian children who were competitive in academic tasks were well liked, but disliked if the domain was athletics. The reverse was true for non-Asian Canadian children (Udvari, Schneider, Labovitz, & Tassi, 1995). Studies of Russian parents reveal a similar pattern. Children of punitive, authoritarian mothers in combination with less responsive fathers display more reactive overt and relational aggression (Hart et al., 2000).

In terms of parental management, similarities and differences across cultures were evident as well (Hart et al., 1998). In Russia, China, and the United States, parental initiating and arranging decreases as children develop. In all three countries, mothers who initiate more peer contacts had children who were more accepted by peers. However, Chinese children were given more autonomy in their initiating activities with peers. Mothers in all cultures were more likely to arrange peer contacts if their children were perceived by teachers as less socially competent. Parental monitoring has similar positive effects on children's misconduct in a variety of cultures, including Denmark (Arnett & Balle-Jensen, 1993), England (Belson, 1975), China (Chen et al., 1998), and Australia (Feldman, Rosenthal, Mont-Reynaud, & Leung, 1991).

Across a variety of cultures, the relative influence of families and peers on children's social behavior may differ but the family processes (e.g., child rearing; advice giving, monitoring) or peer processes (e.g., association with deviant peers) by which these socialization agents achieve their influence are similar.

Conclusions and Remaining Questions

As we have argued in this chapter, both families and peers play significant roles in children's social development. Rather than viewing these two social systems as independent, they function in an interdependent fashion throughout development. Even though the relative balance between peer and family influence shifts across development, with peers playing a larger role as children move from childhood to adolescence, earlier parental childrearing, advice-giving, and managerial practices as well as through concurrent parental efforts to influence and shape their adolescent's social choices, families continue to play an important role.

There are many issues that are still not well understood and these remain challenges for our field. First, although the general outlines of the links between family and peer systems are coming into focus, many details of this picture are still blurry. Of particular concern is the need to increase our understanding of the specific family subsystem experiences and processes, which are related to different aspects of peer relationships, such as friendships, peer groups, and social acceptance. While attachment and close intimate family ties may be more clearly linked to friendships, another form of close relationships than acceptance by peers (Youngblade & Belsky 1992), group-level aspects of family life such as cohesive-

ness and organization may be more closely tied to children's ability to function in the peer group rather than in close dyadic relationships.

Second, the multidirectionality of influence is often included in our models but less often empirically evaluated (Hart et al., 1997). This concept of multidirectionality can take several forms. Within the family itself, the interplay among the subsystems needs more attention. As noted above, the mutual influence among parenting, marriage and sibling relationships needs more attention, instead of assuming that the direction of influence is usually singular (e.g., from marital interaction to parenting). Even when these subsystem links are more clearly understood, the assumption remains that the direction of influence flows from the family to extra-familial relationships. Although there is considerable evidence that extra-familial social friends and social networks have an impact on parent–child relationships (Belsky, 1984), we rarely explore this issue with children. What is the impact of children's extra-familial relationships with friends, peers, and relatives on their family relationships? As has been found in several studies, for example, children's relationships with peers/friends can influence their adjustment to a new sibling (Kramer & Gottman, 1992) and their relationships with their parents (Repetti, 1996).

Third, a developmental analysis of these issues is clearly needed. As other research suggests (Collins & Russell, 1991), the direction of influence between parent and child is more balanced across development, as issues of autonomy become of more central importance to the child and adolescent. Even fundamental descriptive data concerning the ways in which different interactive strategies or managerial processes shift across development are lacking at this point. More importantly, the ways in which the family strategies (e.g., as interactive partner, manager, or direct tutor) relate to social relational competence at different points in the child's development merit investigation.

Finally, our focus in this chapter has been on families and peers but many other socialization influences such as the mass media, the school, and religious institutions play important roles in social development of children. By locating family and peer influences in the larger matrix of socialization forces, we will develop a richer understanding of children's social development. Through a deeper and more textured appreciation of the relative roles of various socialization agents we will be able to develop more effective guidelines for prevention and intervention programs on behalf of children with social problems.

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