Parent-Child Relationship Essay, Research Paper

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The topic I have choose for my paper is that of relationship between parents and children. Some of the points that I will be discussing are child abuse, child neglect and how it can affect a child and the relationship with the parents.

A parent-child relationship is a special relationship that has a huge effect on the way that the child will turn out. This relationship is formed through pregnancy, adoption, and step parenting. Parenting requires a great deal of adaptation. The parents want to develop a strong bond with their child but they also want to maintain a healthy marital relationship and adult friendships. Potential parents often ask themselves what they will be like when they are parents and try to recall some experiences when they were children.

Mothers are the primary caretakers of the children. The fathers have had minimal care taking responsibilities. Many women, if they had a career before hand, have to give it up to stay at home with the child. Although, many fathers where the wives must work become important in the process of care taking because their role must increase to their children. Studies of human fathers and their infants confirm that many fathers can act sensitively with their infant (according to Parke & Sawin, 1980) and their infants form attachments to both their mothers and fathers at roughly the same age (according to Lamb, 1977).

A number of studies have been done on the caretaker’s effects on the child and suggests that the effects may have been caused by child’s behavior as much as by the caretaker’s (according to Bell 1979). The child’s aggression level can be affected by the parent’s authoritarian discipline. “Parents differ widely in sensing the needs of their infants. Some parents are able to quickly notice their child’s moods and periods of distress, this is called synchrony, and they then comfort their child’s needs. Another way that parents react may be slow or they may not even notice a need for action. That is called asynchrony”(according to Schaffer, 1977). In 1978 a group of researchers in infant development at the University of Wisconsin demonstrated that mothers’ synchrony with their infants’ needs prompts physiological responses.

The infant’s temperament may partially stem from the way in which the mother handles the child. The child is affected by the way that they are treated even when they are infants.

Frank Perderson and his colleagues in 1977 conducted research on what the link was between spouse relationship and parent-infant relationship. “Perderson and his colleagues believed that the three units of interaction (mother-father, mother-child, father-child) are interrelated” (according to Perderson 1977). This showed that when the wife and husband showed positive interaction towards each other (smiling and affection) they then would show their infant affection. When there was negative interaction between the wife and husband (verbal critic and blame) it was strongly linked to negative affection shown to the infant by the father.

A form of negative interaction by a parent with their child is child neglect. Child neglect is when the parent of the child fails to meet the child’s basic physical or psychological needs. Child neglect is the most common and most destructive form of child maltreatment.

Child Neglect can occur in any family, rich or poor, but neglectful parents tend to have little education, money, few friends, and many children.

Neglect can take many forms, such as inadequate clothing, shelter, or medical care. The three most harmful forms of child neglect are inadequate food (nutrition), safety and love. (According to the Encyclopedia of Psychology)

Inadequate Food (nutrition): This is the most basic form of physical neglect. In North America more infants die starving to death then dieing by brutality. Improper feeding doesn’t just have to be starving to death, it can also what the child eats and what the parents allow their child to eat. Feeding a child improperly may also result in obesity, which can cause severe damage of a child’s ego in middle childhood.

Safety: Inadequate supervision and precaution are examples of child neglect, and are present in ninety percent (90%) of the serious accidents that happen to children. “In North America more children die of accidents than the next six causes of childhood death combined” (according to the Encyclopedia of Psychology). This is not to say that parental neglect is the only causes of childhood accidents

Love: Older children are able to meet their own needs for nourishment and safety. Every child, no matter what their age, needs the love of their parents. Like John Lennon of the Beatles said “ All you need is love”. Although parents may meet their child’s physical needs but miss their psychological needs. Parental love takes on different forms. “The first year one-on-one interaction with a caretaker is important. The second year encouragement of exploration and language is vital. In early childhood cognitive development should be simulated. In middle childhood school achievement and friendships should be fostered. In adolescence growing independence must be balanced by continued evidence of parental concern” (according to “Psychology” by Don Baucum).

It is the parents’ job to supply those materials until the child is grown and is capable to supply himself/herself with these materials of life. Love has to always be present by the parents even until their dying days.

Another form of negative interaction between a parents and their child is child abuse. “Child Abuse is defined as the non accidental injury of children by their parent or guardian” (according to “Psychology” by Don Vacuum). Child abuse can be either mental or physical. The way Americans approach child abuse has followed the shifting history of social values and attitudes toward children.

Child abuse is a big obstacle in the relationship between a parent and their child. Child abuse is a major form of negative interaction between a parents and their child.

Sexual abuse is in it’s own separate area which deserves attention in it’s own right. Sexual abuse can take place with or without other physical abuse or neglect.

The majority of physical abuse requires no medical treatment and fewer that one percent (1%) receive fatal injuries. “Studies find boys to be more frequently abused physically than girls until adolescence, then with the inclusion of sexual abuse, girls are more frequently abused” (according to the Encyclopedia of Psychology).

Most parents who abuse their child carry no serious psychiatric diagnosis, but they do often have difficulty with social relationships. The parents also have a problem with controlling their temper and impulsive behavior, which becomes violent. Most of these parents don’t experience considerable stress from their environment, but have difficulty dealing with stress through appropriate behavior.

Negative interaction in the parent/child relationship can cause behavior disorders in the child. Alcoholism, hostility, cruelty, neglect, overprotection of the child or excessive ambitions for the child are disruptive actions that may lead to behavior disorders. Child psychiatry is a way to help the problems in the relationship between the parent/child.

Children watch their parents closely and are sensitive to their moods and actions. They are like this because they know that their care and well being rest solely in the hands of their parents.

The key relationship in any two-part family is the parental relationship. Children’s knowledge of how they are supposed to treat each other, is reflected mainly upon their observations of how their parents treat each other and other people. Parent/child relationship is important because they provide the main context in how they are to be social.

The parent/child relationship is important because it allows the child to learn from his/her parents. Good, loving parents will help to develop a better child. A good relationship will allow for good friendships later in life and also a good upbringing.

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