A photograph of a young child from behind, wearing a dark denim jacket, holding the hand of an adult whose arm and denim sleeve are visible on the right. The background is a soft-focus grey with several bubbles floating in the air. The text is overlaid on the image, framed by white L-shaped brackets.

#14

PARENTAL INFLUENCE

*Our parents shape who we are in
both visible and invisible ways.*

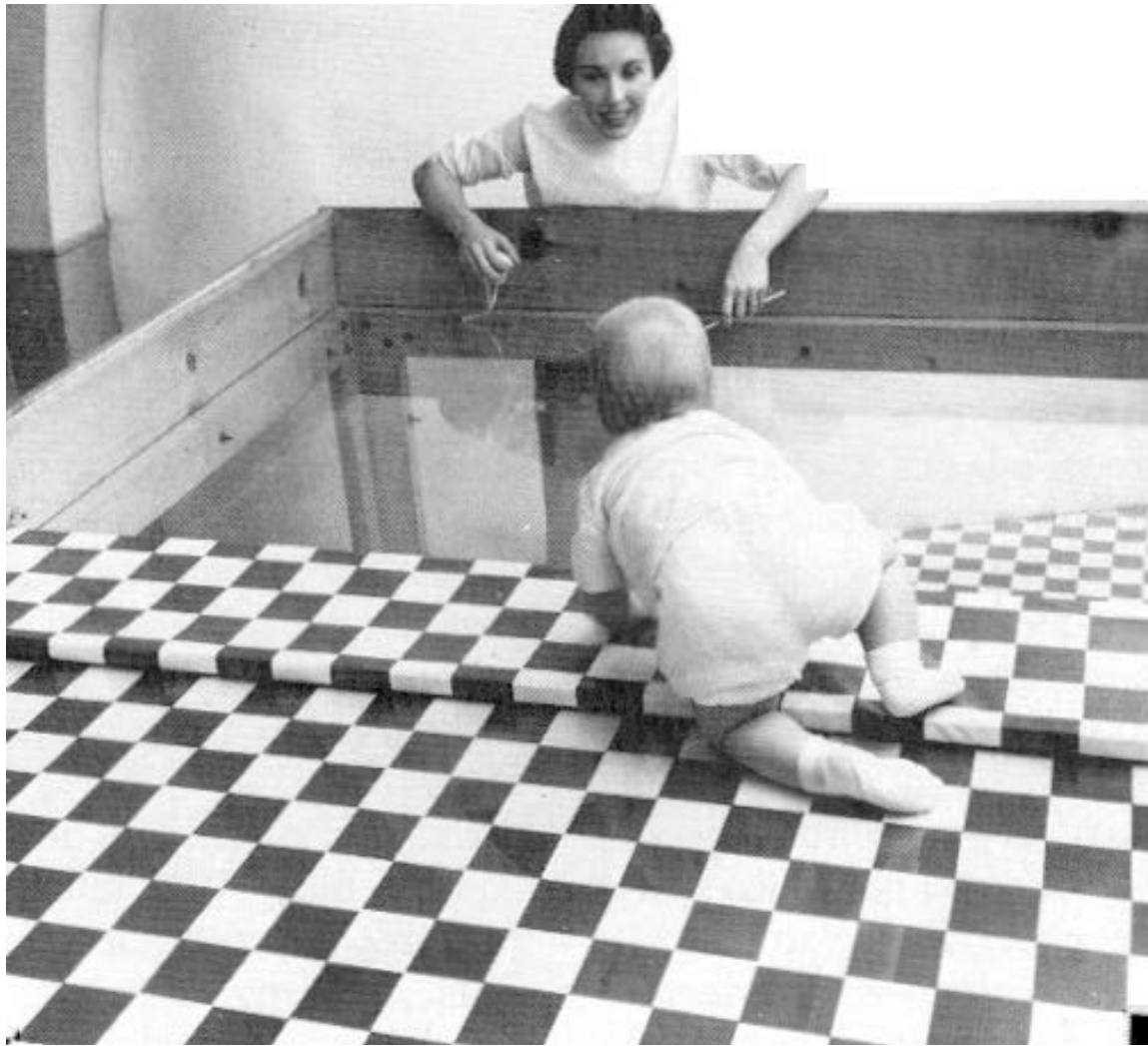
SOCIAL REFERENCING

- Social referencing

- Active search by infants for emotional information from parents (and others) and use of that information to appraise a situation (Klinnert et al., 2013)
- Already observable in the first year



Infants were more likely to approach novel toys when the mother smiled, avoid it when the mother posed fear, and show mixed reactions to the neutral expression (Klinnert, 1981).



Encountering a visual cliff, when the mother posed joy or interest, most infants crossed the deep side; when the mother posed fear or anger, very few infants crossed (Sorce et al., 1985).



In one study, it was found that infants were more likely to approach the toy when the mother, but not a stranger, expressed a joyful (vs. fearful) expression (Zarbatany & Lamb, 1985).



Social referencing forms the basis of acquisition of lasting anxiety and avoidance (Rapee, 2001). Children tend to have a higher level of trait anxiety when they have anxious mother and father. This association was particularly pronounced when the parents reported that they often expressed their fears (Muris et al., 1996).

ATTACHMENT

■ Attachment

- Strong emotional connection with those to whom we feel closest (e.g., parents)
- Ensures that infants don't stray too far from the caretakers (Bowlby, 1973)

1. Baby plays with toys while mother is present
2. Stranger enters
3. Mother leaves
4. Stranger tries to interact with baby
5. Mother returns (“first union”) and stranger leaves
6. Mother leaves
7. Stranger returns
8. Mother returns (“second union”)

Ainsworth strange situation: Researchers observe how comfortable the infant explores on his/her own, and the infant’s reaction when encountering a stranger, separating from mother, and reuniting with mother (Ainsworth et al., 1978).

Type	Observations
Secure	The infant explores the room but checks to make sure mom is watching; returns to mom when stranger enters; becomes upset when mom leaves; greets mom when mom returns (mom as a secure base)
Insecure-avoidant	The infant explores the room independently; is indifferent when stranger enters; shows no distress when mom leaves; displays little reaction when mom returns (no preference for mom over stranger)
Insecure-anxious	The infant does not explore without mom's assistance; shows distress when stranger enters; panics when mom leaves; shows mixed emotions when mom returns (seeks and avoid contacts; ambivalence)

- Attachment

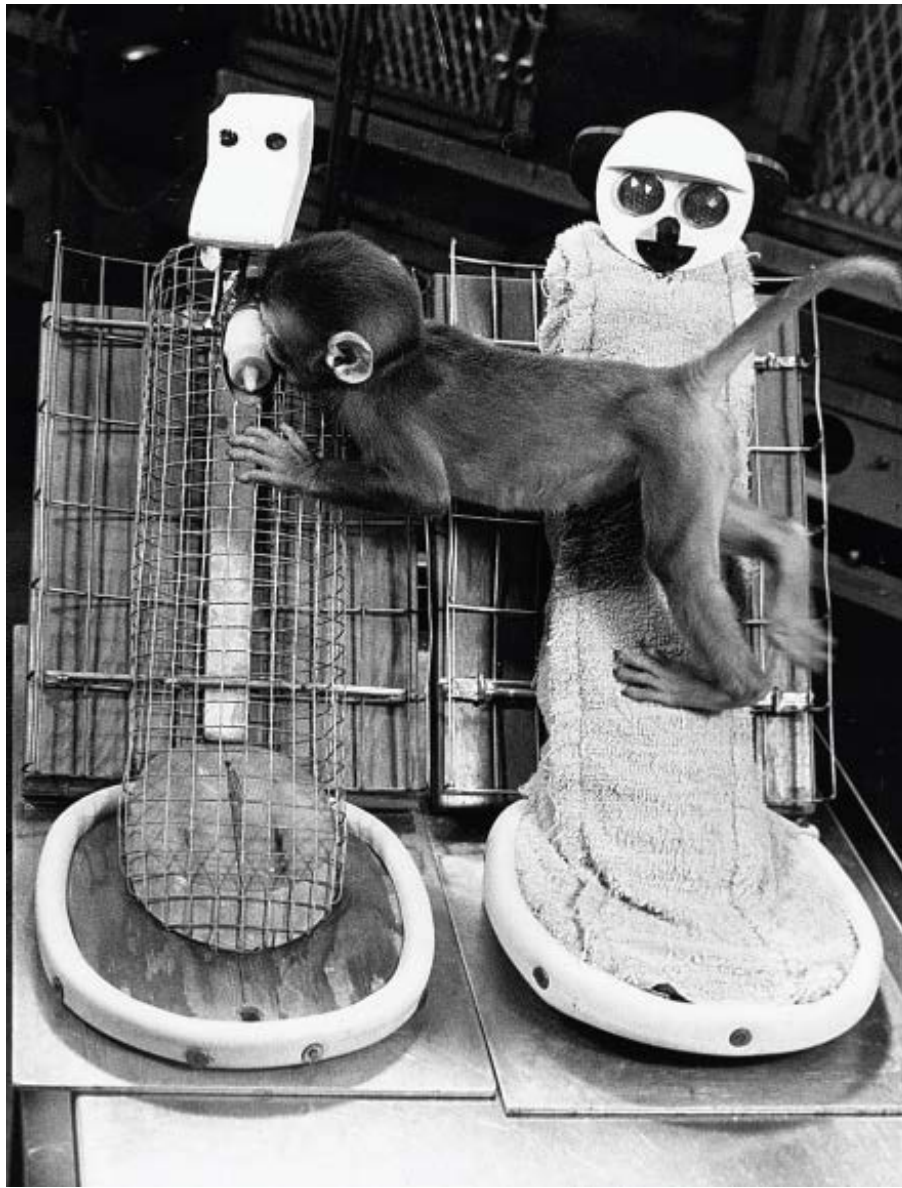
- Predicts children's later behavior
- Infants with secure attachment grow up to be more sociable, liked, empathetic and helpful, and emotionally mature; and less psychopathological, aggressive, and disruptive (e.g., Bowlby, 2005)

- Attachment

- Styles of romantic love also show either secure, avoidant, or anxious attachment, and predict relationship success (Shaver & Mikulincer, 2007)

■ Attachment

- On what basis do infants bond to parents?
- Contact comfort: positive emotions afforded by touch (Harlow, 1958)
- Responsiveness: meeting physical needs as well as emotional needs



Harlow (1958) observed that baby monkeys preferred the soft cloth mother over the wired mother, even though the latter dispensed milk.



Mothers of children with avoidant attachment tend to reject the infant or withdraws from contact with him/her. Mothers of children with anxious attachment to be inconsistently or unreliably available.

PARENTING STYLES

■ Parenting styles

- Standard strategies that parents use in their child rearing (Baumrind, 1991)
- Combination of responsiveness and demandingness
- Consistently related to adolescent adjustment, school performance, and psychosocial maturity (Steinberg 2000)

1. Children do best when they follow their parents' wishes without questioning them. Agree _____ Disagree _____
2. Making children follow too many rules breaks their natural spirit. Agree _____ Disagree _____
3. Parents should encourage independence in their children. Agree _____ Disagree _____
4. Parents don't need to set limits. Agree _____ Disagree _____
5. Parents should always be in charge, making sure their children follow the rules. Agree _____ Disagree _____
6. It's important to let children make their own mistakes. Agree _____ Disagree _____
7. Parents should explain the reasons for their rules to their children. Agree _____ Disagree _____
8. It doesn't matter much if parents are emotionally supportive of their children. Agree _____ Disagree _____

Some sample items of a measure of parenting styles

Parenting Style	Parent Behavior	Type of Behavior Produced in Child
Authoritarian	Rigid, punitive, strict standards (example: "If you don't clean your room, I'm going to take away your iPod for good and ground you.")	Unsociable, unfriendly, withdrawn
Permissive	Lax, inconsistent, undemanding (example: "It might be good to clean your room, but I guess it can wait.")	Immature, moody, dependent, low self-control
Authoritative	Firm, sets limits and goals, uses reasoning, encourages independence (example: "You'll need to clean your room before we can go out to the restaurant. As soon as you finish, we'll leave.")	Good social skills, likable, self-reliant, independent
Uninvolved	Detached emotionally, sees role only as providing food, clothing, and shelter (example: "I couldn't care less if your room is a pigsty.")	Indifferent, rejecting behavior

INTERGENERATIONAL TRANSMISSION

- Intergenerational transmission
 - Transfer of abilities, traits, behaviors, and outcomes from older to younger generations
 - Social anxiety (e.g., Murray et al., 2008)
 - Attachment (e.g., Van Ijzendoorn, 1997)
 - Parenting styles (e.g., Simons et al., 1991)

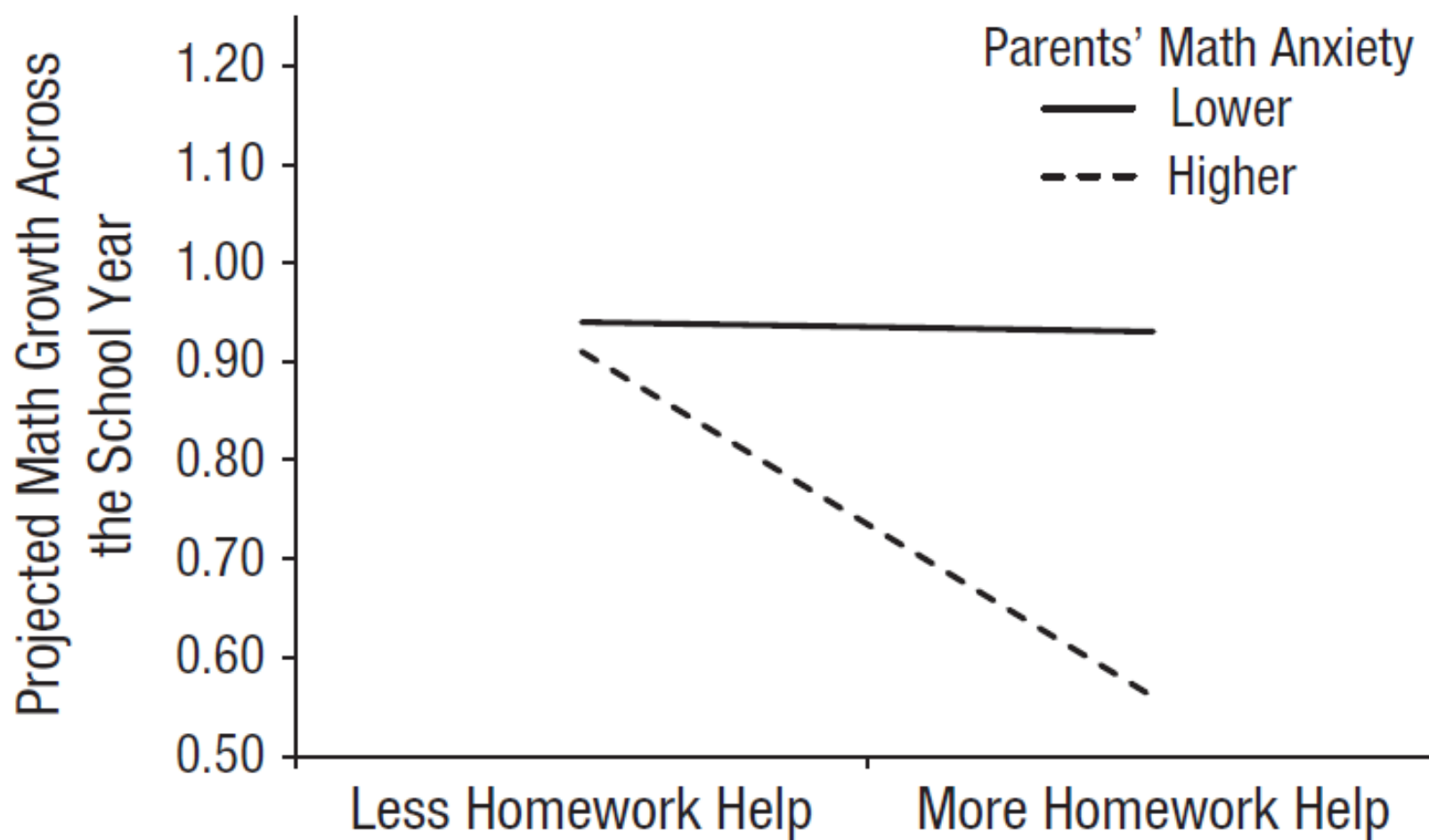
- Intergenerational transmission
 - Typically multiple transmission mechanisms are involved
 - e.g., genetic transmission, socio-economic environment, deliberate instruction, observational learning
 - Young-to-old transmission also possible



Mothers' depression contributed to their own life stress, adversely affected their parenting quality and their children's development, and added life stress to their children. These, in turn, were associated with children's depression (Hammen et al., 2004).



Children through exposure to aggression between their parents may learn to accept coercion and aggression as appropriate means to resolve conflicts with the partner, and associate aggression with certain family roles (Ehrensaft et al., 2003; Stith et al., 2000).



When parents were anxious about math, their children learned significantly less over the school year and experienced more anxiety. This was found particularly when parents provided more homework help (during which they expressed negative attitude toward math and frustration with children's performance) (Maloney et al., 2015).



Parents' **person praise** (e.g., “you are so smart”) leads to children's **fixed mindset** (“ability is fixed”), while **process praise** (e.g., “I like your effort”) leads to a **growth mindset** (“ability is changeable”). The latter contributes to learning orientation (vs. performance orientation) and persistence (Gunderson et al., 2012; 2013).