



# The Developing Parent

## Instructor Manual

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The purpose of this instructor resource module is to help students learn about parent behavior and how parents develop over time. A six-stage parent development theory is discussed as well as three major influences on parenting; the parent's characteristics, the child's characteristics, and the contextual factors and sociocultural characteristics. The instructor's manual provides recommendations to help you structure a lesson about the development of parents with activities, discussion questions, and an accompanying PowerPoint slide show. There are additional outside resources and suggested readings that can be used to further build your lesson.

## Learning Objectives

### Content Specific Learning Objectives:

- Identify and describe the stages of parenthood
- Identify and describe the influences on parenting

### Relevant APA Learning Objectives (Version 2.0):

- Describe key concepts, principles and overarching themes in psychology (1.1)
- Describe applications of psychology (1.3)
- Use scientific reasoning to interpret psychological phenomena (2.1)
- Incorporate sociocultural factors into scientific inquiry (2.5)

- Build and enhance interpersonal relationships (3.2)
- Exhibit effective presentation skills for different purposes (4.2)
- Interact effectively with others (4.3)
- Enhance teamwork capacity (5.4)

## **Abstract**

This module focuses on parenthood as a developmental task of adulthood. Parents take on new roles as their children develop, transforming their identity as a parent as the developmental demands of their children change. The main influences on parenting, parent characteristics, child characteristics, and contextual factors, are described.

## **Class Design Recommendations**

This instructor's manual module is presented in one 90-minute class but could also be taught in a two 50-60-minute classes. If teaching it in two classes, we recommend assigning the last assignment "Exploring Parenting Advice" to be done at home rather than during class. Please also refer to the Noba PowerPoint slides that accompany this outline.

## **Topic Outline**

- Introduction
  - Changes in parenthood
- The Six Stages of Parent Development
  - Image making
  - Nurturing
  - Authority
  - Interpretive
  - Interdependent
  - Departure

- Influences on Parenting
  - Parent characteristics
  - Child characteristics
  - Contextual Factors and Sociocultural Characteristics
- Conclusion

## Module Outline

- **Introduction:**Psychologist have worked to understand why parents behave the way they do. While much is known about how parents impact children less is understood about how parents develop and the impact of parents on children. Parenthood is a normative developmental task in adulthood and people have children for emotional, economic and utilitarian, and social-normative reasons.
  - **Changes in Parenthood:** Across the world, including the US, parenthood is undergoing changes. Children are less likely to live with both parents, parents are having few children overall and are older when they have children, and many children are being born outside of a parent marriage.
- **The Six Stages of Parent Development:**Galinsky (1987) outlined the stages that parents go through as they develop new skills and abilities based on their child's growth. However, it should be noted that currently these theoretical stages are not yet generalizable to parents of different races, ages, and religions, nor is there empirical data on the factors that influence individual differences in these stages.
  - **The image making stage:**As parents plan for a child during pregnancy they imagine their future role as parents, reflect on their experiences with their parents and develop ideas about what type of parent they want to be.
  - **The nurturing stage:**During infancy parents work to develop an attachment to their new baby. For some this is fast while for others it takes time. Adult relationships shift (romantic and family). Parents identity is reshaped as parenting responsibilities are the most demanding during infancy.

- **The authority stage:** From 2 to 4 or 5-years old parents are establishing rules and deciding on consequence for their child's behavior.
  - **The interpretive stage:** School age children (kindergarten through adolescents) require parents to help interpret their experiences. Parents are learning when to step in and when to allow children autonomy as they explore interests, relationships with peers, and learn behaviors and values their parents deem appropriate.
  - **The interdependent stage:** Teenagers and parents need to work together in this stage to make decisions in such a way that youth practice autonomy but parents still have influence and authority.
  - **The departure stage:** Parents are evaluating their success and failures and preparing for their child's departure into adulthood. Parenting adult children is much different as it becomes a less central role.
- **Influences on Parenting:** the proposed influences on parent behavior include the parent's characteristics, the child's characteristics, as well as contextual and sociocultural characteristics.
    - **Parent characteristics:** Characteristics including parent age, gender, personality, developmental history, and health all affect their behaviors. Parents who are agreeable, outgoing, conscientious, and are less anxious and negative, are warmer and provide more structure and support their children's autonomy. Parent's experiences as children also have an effect. Parents learn positive and negative behaviors from their parents, however, some will change their parenting methods if they were dissatisfied with their own parents' approach.
    - **Child characteristics:** Child characteristics, such as gender, birth order, temperament, and health status affect parents' behavior. Temperament is particularly influential as difficult children decrease parent confidence, increase punitive approaches, and decrease satisfaction in marriages, work, and family roles. Gender is also particularly influential as parents treat and talk to boys and girls differently.
    - **Contextual Factors and Sociocultural Characteristics:** Socioeconomic hardship can negatively influence parenting skills and behaviors. Culture determines what goals are important for children. Parenting skills are thus culturally specific. Neighborhoods, schools and social networks are also contextual factors that play a role.
  - **Conclusion:** Many factors influence parent's behaviors including a bidirectional relationship

between parents and children and the context in which they live. Parents' behavior will change over time as they create new identities to face new challenges.

## Difficult Terms

Attachment

Bidirectional

Contextual Factors

Interdependent

Normative Developmental Task

Sociocultural

Temperament

## Lecture Frameworks

*Overview:* Begin the class period by asking students a series of multiple choice questions about changes in parenthood over recent years. Cover the answers to each question and present them with interesting data from the Pew Research Center. Next, allow student to work in groups to cover the six stages of parent development. In this activity they will complete an advanced organizer to better remember the information. Using direct instruction, describe to the students the influence of parent and child characteristics on parenting behavior. A temperament questionnaire activity is then used to further explore how child characteristics impact parent behavior. Contextual and sociocultural influences are then covered using direct instruction. An assignment is given to the students to explore parenting advice on the Internet that has them reflect on the advice using the information from the module. The module content is then concluded and a classroom assessment technique, the minute paper, is utilized to end the lesson (Angelo & Cross, 1993).

- **Introduction and warm up activity:** To cover the changes seen in parenthood over recent years ask students a series of questions. These questions will get them thinking about current trends and works to introduce the module content. See the "Changes in Parenthood Quiz" described below for instructions and suggestions.
- **6 Stages Group Activity:** To cover the 6 stages of parent development students work in teams to fill out information on an advanced organizer. Groups work alone and then share

their ideas with the class. See the “6 Stages Group Activity” described below for details.

- **Direct Instruction:** Refer to PowerPoint slides to cover information about parent and child characteristics and how they influence parenting behavior.
- **Temperament Questionnaire Activity:** Have the students complete the Temperament Questionnaire (Pliner & Loewen, 1997). Students will reflect on their answers by thinking about the influence their temperament might have had on their parents and their own parenting behavior. Use the Temperament Questionnaire activity described in the Activities and Demonstrations section to guide you.
- **Direct Instruction:** Refer to PowerPoint slides to cover information about contextual and sociocultural characteristics and how they influence parenting behavior.
- **Class Assignment: Exploring Parenting advice:** Students are asked to find parenting advice information on the Internet. They are asked to consider the parent characteristics, child characteristics and the contextual and sociocultural characteristics being addressed in the sources that they find.
- **Direct Instruction:** Refer to PowerPoint slides to conclude the module.
- **CAT:** Use the Classroom Assessment Technique “The Minute Paper” to assess student’s understanding of the material covered in this lesson (Angelo & Cross, 1993). Have students complete the CAT by taking one minute to write their answer this question: What is the most important point you learned today? You could also ask them: What point remains least clear to you? The purpose is to elicit data about students’ comprehension of a particular class session. Collect student responses when they are done. Review the responses and note any useful comments. During the next class periods emphasize the issues illuminated by your students’ comments.

## Activities & Demonstrations

**Changes in Parenthood Quiz:** This activity is completed during class and works as a great warm-up to introduce the module content. For this activity students will answer a series of questions and see data about the ways that parenting is changing over time in the US.

- Time: 10 minutes

- Materials: Pen and paper for students, PowerPoint slide with quiz questions, internet for additional resource links.
- Directions:
  - Have students pull out a pen and paper to record answers to the quiz questions. Tell students the questions are not graded but are intended to get them thinking about current trends.
  - Using the PowerPoint slides provided, have students answer the quiz questions. The questions can also be found in the handout in Appendix A of the PowerPoint that could be given out and completed prior to starting class.
  - After each question is asked cover the correct answer and show the students the corresponding data or source for the answer. Allow students to discuss with one another if they were correct in their responses. Allow them also to ask questions or to discuss surprises or confirmed expectations about the changes in parenthood.

6 Stages Group Activity: Advanced organizers help students remember information. In this activity each student is given a blank advanced organizer to take notes on. Groups are created and assigned a stage to fill in on the advanced organizer. At the conclusion of the activity students share their stage with the rest of the class so that the advanced organizer can be completed in full.

- Time: 25 minutes
- Materials: 6 Stage advanced organizer, PowerPoint slides, module for student reference and the Internet for additional research if needed.
- Directions:
  - Introduce the 6 stages of parent development using the PowerPoint slides.
  - Divide students into teams. You can have 6 teams of 3-4, or 12 teams of 2-3, or more depending on your class size. Assign each of the groups with a stage.
  - Student's work to complete all the information requested on the advanced organizer, see Appendix B of the PowerPoint for a printable blank organizer as well as questions to display to the various groups.
  - Have one group from each stage share their work with the class. You can ask students to share their aspect of the advanced organizer using a document camera, by writing the information on the board, or copying it and emailing it to students later on. They

can also take notes as the group shares just make sure students are clear and go slow enough so that everyone can obtain the information needed.

**Temperament Questionnaire Activity:** This activity can be completed during class. For the activity student complete the Approach and Avoidance Temperament Questionnaire (Elliot & Thrash, 2010). After completing the questionnaire, the students will be instructed to score it and will be provided time to share their scores. Students will then reflect on their answers by thinking about the influence their temperament might have had on their parents and their own parenting behavior.

- Time: 15 minutes
- Materials: Pen and Temperament Questionnaire handout (See Appendix C in the PowerPoint for a printable file). PowerPoint slide with activity questions.
- Directions:
  - Handout the Temperament Questionnaire. Instruct students to answer the questions.
  - Have students score their responses. Allow them to compare their responses with their peers. You can also ask how many scored higher for approach and how many scored higher for avoidance.
  - Define temperament and the approach/avoidance dimension using the PowerPoint slides.
  - Pose the three discussion questions on the PowerPoint slide. Allow students time to talk with one another. Lead a larger class discussion to sum up the activity.

**Class Assignment: Exploring Parenting Advice:** This activity can be completed during class or could be assigned to students to complete at home. Students are asked to find parenting advice information on the Internet. They are asked to consider the parent characteristics, child characteristics and the contextual and sociocultural characteristics being addressed in the sources that they find.

- Time: 30 minutes
- Materials: Pen and Exploring Parenting Advice handout (See Appendix D in the PowerPoint for a printable handout file), PowerPoint slides with activity questions, Internet
- Directions:



- Provide students with the Exploring Parenting Advice handout. Instruct them to use the Internet to complete the handout.
- Students can turn this in for review or you could facilitate small group or a large class discussion on what the Internet research found.

## Additional Activities

Roberts, M. C., Gomez, M. D., Kim, K. L., & Corbin, S. R. (2006). Dr. Phil visits the classroom: "getting real" with child behavior and development. *Teaching of Psychology, 33*, 262-265. doi:10.1207/s15328023top3304\_7

- This paper describes an assignment where students view episodes of Dr. Phil and work to connect his advice with their own understanding of children's behavior and parenting. Students report that the analysis assignment enhanced their understanding and increased their skepticism about media presentations of psychological information.

Schwarzmueller, A. (2006). Interviews with primary-caregiving fathers via e-mail. *Teaching of Psychology, 33*, 247-275, doi:10.1207/s15328023top3304\_7

- For this activity, students interview primary caregiving fathers and write papers connecting their interview with child development content. Because parenthood is changing this activity fits nicely within this module. Analyses of the project suggested that students learned more about the challenges that fathers face and gender stereotypes about parenting.

## Discussion Points

- Think about your parent's behavior when you were a child. What did you like or dislike about their parenting style? Were they strict, just right, or did they give up too much control?
  - This question will yield a variety of responses. Be sensitive to students who might not want to share personal histories. Additionally, be prepared for a student to share too much and be mindful to reign in the conversation if needed. Encourage students to

share specific examples that lead them to their conclusions about their parents style and encourage them to think about why they liked or disliked the style.

- Choose one stage of the 6 stages of parent behavior theory. Think back on your own family. For the stage you chose, what specific challenges did your family face? How did your parents overcome that challenge, or were they not able to do so successfully?
  - Again, be careful when asking students to share experiences from their personal history as some might have negative memories especially when talking about challenges that families face. Expect students to talk about times when a family member lost a job, challenges in relationships such as divorce or other issues such as substance abuse or even relocating the family to a new home. Try to focus the conversation on how parents were successful in overcoming those challenges and how this is particularly determined by the stage of parenting being explored.
- Choose one stage of the 6 stages of parent behavior theory. Based on your approach and avoidance score (from the temperament questionnaire), how did your temperament affect your parent's behavior in that specific stage?
  - This question is designed specifically to have students integrate multiple aspects of the lesson into one discussion. They can think about the effects of their temperament at one stage or multiple if time allows.
- How do you foresee parenting behaviors to change in the future? What will parenting look like in the next 5, 10 and 20 years?
  - Based on previous trends we might expect that parenting behaviors would continue to change based on gender. In other words, fathers will continue to take on more roles at home and mothers will continue to take on more roles outside of the home. We might also expect more single parent families, older first time parents, and more same gender parents. It would be interesting to also discuss the ways in which globalization and technology might continue to change parenthood.

## Outside Resources

Article: "Is a Child's Behavior Always a Reflection of His Parents?" - This article is written

by Dr. Peggy Drexler and discusses the notion that child behavior is not always a reflection of parenting.

[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/peggy-drexler/is-a-childs-behavior-alwa\\_b\\_1886367.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/peggy-drexler/is-a-childs-behavior-alwa_b_1886367.html)

**Article: "Parent behavior toward first and second children"** - This journal article describes how parents behave differently and the same with their first and second born children. This is an interesting read to learn more about parenting behavior and how it changes based on a child characteristic, birth order.

<http://psycnet.apa.org/psycinfo/1954-08594-001>

**Org: American Psychological Association (APA), Parenting** - Parenting is a psychology topic explored by APA. They state that, "Parenting practices around the world share three major goals: ensuring children's health and safety, preparing children for life as productive adults and transmitting cultural values. A high-quality parent-child relationship is critical for healthy development." This webpage links to articles to support these goals.

<http://www.apa.org/topics/parenting/>

**Org: Society for the Research in Child Development (SRCD)** - SRCD works to coordinate and integrate research in human development. It aims to assist in the dissemination of research findings and in this way can be a great resource to teachers and students.

<http://www.srcd.org>

**Web: American Psychological Association- Information and Resources on Parenting**

<http://www.apa.org/topics/parenting/index.aspx>

**Web: NPR, Parenting** - National Public Radio presented interesting stories on many topics related to child development. The page linked here has many stories on parenting.

<http://www.npr.org/tags/126952921/parenting>

**Web: PBS Parents: Child Development** - PBS has some interesting resources for parents including articles, games and products. This is a good resource for students looking for some friendly and less psychology based sources that they can read or share with their own families.

<http://www.pbs.org/parents/child-development/>

## **Evidence-Based Teaching**

Symons, D. K., & Smith, K. H. (2014). Evidence of psychological engagement when raising a virtual child. *Psychology Learning & Teaching*, 13, 52-57. doi:10.2304/plat.2014.13.1.52

- The website MyVirtualChild© has students make parenting decisions, provides them with feedback on those decisions, and prompts them with reflection and content based questions that can be graded by instructors. This paper presents data from 117 students who raised a virtual child. Outcomes suggest that the program is engaging and meaningful for students. Students felt the program helped with learning and critical thinking skills.

Sheldon, J. P. (1996). Student-centered skits: Interactive class demonstrations. *Teaching of Psychology*, 23, 115-116. doi:10.1207/s15328023top2302\_12

- Skits can be used as an in class activity for a variety of topics including parenting styles. This article describes their use and reports student outcomes include preference and learning of the material.

Barnas, M. (2000). "Parenting" students: Applying developmental psychology to the college classroom. *Teaching of Psychology*, 27, 272-284. doi:10.1207/S15328023TOP2704\_06

- While this article does not describe a specific classroom technique it does explain a way of approaching college students that is unique and can be very beneficial. Barnas uses Baumrind's (1971) research on parenting styles to understand the structure and dynamics of the college classroom and she applies this to her teaching philosophy.

## Links to ToPIX Materials

**Books and Films:** An example of a great book in this section is by Judith Rich Harris (1999) and is called, "The Nurture Assumption: Why Children Turn Out the Way They Do." The nature vs. nurture debate is discussed which relates to parenting development and behavior.

<http://topix.teachpsych.org/w/page/39234155/Development>

**Developmental Activities, Demonstrations, or Handouts:** Many of the activities in this section are for development in general however some can be used specifically for parenting. For example, one is called "Do perfect parents make perfect children." It

**describes an activity from Freakonomics, by Steven Levitt and Stephen Dubner that can be done in class.**

<http://topix.teachpsych.org/w/page/19980987/Development%20in%20the%20Classroom>

**Developmental Videos: Videos are posted on topics related to development. None are focused on parenthood specifically but general information about child development can be found.**

<http://topix.teachpsych.org/w/page/19980986/Development%20Video>

**In the News: There is one article related to parenting that is interesting. "The Risks of Parenting While Plugged In" came out in 2010 in the New York Times and is still relevant to parenting challenges today.**

<http://topix.teachpsych.org/w/page/19980985/Development%20In%20the%20News>

## **Teaching Topics**

Teaching The Most Important Course

[https://nobaproject.com/documents/1\\_Teaching\\_The\\_Most\\_Important\\_Course.pdf](https://nobaproject.com/documents/1_Teaching_The_Most_Important_Course.pdf)

Content Coverage

[https://nobaproject.com/documents/2\\_Content\\_Coverage.pdf](https://nobaproject.com/documents/2_Content_Coverage.pdf)

Motivating Students

[https://nobaproject.com/documents/3\\_Motivating\\_Students\\_Tips.pdf](https://nobaproject.com/documents/3_Motivating_Students_Tips.pdf)

Engaging Large Classes

[https://nobaproject.com/documents/4\\_Engaging\\_Large\\_Classes.pdf](https://nobaproject.com/documents/4_Engaging_Large_Classes.pdf)

Assessment Learning

[https://nobaproject.com/documents/5\\_Assessment\\_Learning.pdf](https://nobaproject.com/documents/5_Assessment_Learning.pdf)

Teaching Biological Psychology

[https://nobaproject.com/documents/6\\_Teaching\\_Bio\\_Psych.pdf](https://nobaproject.com/documents/6_Teaching_Bio_Psych.pdf)

## **PowerPoint Presentation**

This module has an associated PowerPoint presentation. Download it at [https://nobaproject.com//images/shared/supplement\\_editions/000/000/254/The%20Developing%20Parent.pptx?1475773869](https://nobaproject.com//images/shared/supplement_editions/000/000/254/The%20Developing%20Parent.pptx?1475773869).

## About Noba

The Diener Education Fund (DEF) is a non-profit organization founded with the mission of re-inventing higher education to serve the changing needs of students and professors. The initial focus of the DEF is on making information, especially of the type found in textbooks, widely available to people of all backgrounds. This mission is embodied in the Noba project.

Noba is an open and free online platform that provides high-quality, flexibly structured textbooks and educational materials. The goals of Noba are three-fold:

- To reduce financial burden on students by providing access to free educational content
- To provide instructors with a platform to customize educational content to better suit their curriculum
- To present material written by a collection of experts and authorities in the field

The Diener Education Fund is co-founded by Drs. Ed and Carol Diener. Ed is the Joseph Smiley Distinguished Professor of Psychology (Emeritus) at the University of Illinois. Carol Diener is the former director of the Mental Health Worker and the Juvenile Justice Programs at the University of Illinois. Both Ed and Carol are award- winning university teachers.

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