

**What Do I Want For My Child?  
The Relationship Between Mothers' Goals, Style, and Practices**

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**Introduction**

Research into the relationship between parenting style and developmental outcomes has resulted in an impressive consistency of findings. For more than half a century, researchers have found that parents who exert firm control, are emotionally warm and responsive to child needs, and who engage in discussion and explanation of the reasoning underlying their actions have had children characterized by instrumental competence, psychosocial maturity, and strong social skills (Symonds (1939), Baldwin (1948, 1955) Child (1954), Schaeffer (1959), Sears, et al. (1957), Bronfenbrenner (1961), Baumrind (1966, 1967, 1970, 1971, 1989, 1991a), Dornbusch et al, (1987), Steinberg et al (1989, 1991, 1992), Weiss & Schwartz (1996)). Baumrind's conceptualization of parenting style as a constellation of parental values, beliefs, and behaviors has provided the framework for much of this recent work. As a heuristic device, parenting style's strength is that it allows researchers to capture suites of the specific qualities that characterize parent:child relationships within a categorical framework. For example, authoritative parenting denotes an ecological niche that includes parents' beliefs about their obligation to socialize and teach their children, parenting practices that, for young children, include establishing and enforcing a large number of specific rules, frequent verbal interaction, including the use of explanations and responsiveness to children's questions, and emotional warmth and supportiveness (Baumrind, 1991a). Each of the parenting styles that Baumrind has identified occupies a different niche that varies across one or more of these dimensions.

Darling and Steinberg (1993) have argued that to understand the processes underlying parenting style, one must distinguish between parents' goals, parenting style, and the ways in which parents attempt to implement their goals through specific parenting practices. In this model, parenting style is conceptualized as the overall emotional climate within which socialization occurs. Parenting styles are defined as children's perception of their parents' attitudes towards them, based on their experience of parental behaviors and influenced by their own developmental history. Because of this, within this model parenting style is described as a relationship quality, reflecting characteristics of both parent and child, rather than a quality of the parent. Parenting style is thought to provide a context which moderates the effectiveness of specific parenting practices both directly and through its influence on children's willingness to be socialized. The authors argue that authoritative parenting is associated with positive child and adolescent outcomes because authoritative parents tend to use more effective parenting practices, because the positive emotional climate associated with authoritative parenting makes those practices more effective, and because children raised by authoritative parents will tend to be less resistant and more open to their parents' efforts to socialize them.

Because parenting style is, in this contextual model, 'goal-free', understanding the goals towards which parents socialize their children and the ways in which they implement these goals is necessary in order to assess the importance of parenting style in the process of socialization. For example, the contextual model suggests that parenting style would predict academic outcomes only to the extent that parents engaged in specific practices that were effective in influencing academic outcomes or that children's openness to adult socialization generalized from the family to the school setting. Parenting practices, on the other hand, are goal defined. Parents' values and goals, in conjunction with their resources and personality, are thought to determine both the practices that they employ to socialize their children and the emotional climate in which the socialization takes place.

This paper addresses three questions implicit in the model of parenting style Darling and Steinberg proposed. **First, to what extent are the goals mothers have for their children reflected in differences in their parenting style? Second, to what extent are these goals reflected in parenting behavior?** These parenting behaviors include both specific parenting practices (hypothesized to be goal-defined) and in non-goal directed behaviors communicating parents' affect towards the child. **Finally, to what extent are parents' goals reflected in children's perception of both parenting style and parenting practice?** This last question is important, given the variety of ways in which parenting style has been assessed. Baumrind, for example, has used a combination of mother interviews and detailed observations to derive her parenting style typologies, including mothers' statements about their own beliefs in her assessments. Are these beliefs reflected in children's perceptions?

**The study of values**

Although the study of values has a long tradition within the social sciences, values remain elusive both in their definition and their measurement. Clyde Kluckhohn wrote: "There is a philosophy behind the way of life of every individual and every relatively homogeneous group at any point in their history" (cited by F. Kluckhohn, 1957, p. 83). First and foremost, values provide an

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organizing framework that gives coherence to behaviors, attitudes, and beliefs (Rokeach, 1970). Values shape how we present ourselves to others (Rokeach, 1973), and give meaning to our lives and history (Williams, 1979). Within the anthropological and sociological traditions, research on values has focused on universal categories of values and on cultural and sub-cultural variability. At this level, values provide insight into the ways in which the human species organizes its perceptions (Schwartz & Bilsky, 1987, 1990; Schwartz, 1990).

Values provide meaning. They also, by definition, denote discrimination - they are the basis by which we decide that all choices are not, in fact, equal. Williams described value systems as "an organized set of preferential rules for making selections, resolving conflicts, and coping with needs for social and psychological defenses of the choices made or proposed" (1979, p. 128). These two qualities of values - that they are shared among a culture, but that individuals within a culture hold different values - make values difficult to capture using traditional analytic strategies. Williams' definition of value systems implies that most of the variability within a given culture will lie not in the absolute importance that people place on a particular value, but rather on its relative importance. In addition, it implies that values will come into play most clearly in cases of conflict between two desirable (or undesirable) outcomes. For example, if asked whether they want their children to be happy, industrious, and independent, most American parents will answer 'yes' because each of these characteristics is valued within the culture. Values become important in determining behavior only when they come into conflict. Is it worth asking a child contentedly watching television to stop what she is doing and finish her homework, knowing the argument that will ensue? The answer depends partly on the *relative* importance that parents place upon harmonious relationships, child happiness, and industriousness, not on the absolute importance of any one value.

Parents' values and goals are interrelated. McGillicuddy-DeLisi and Sigel (1995) talk about parental values as enduring goals parents hold for their children. The relative importance that parents place on their adult children acquiring particular qualities reflects an underlying framework of preference and meaning. In this paper, the patterning of parents' long-term goals for their children are seen as a reflection of their values.

## Values and parenting

During adolescence, parenting style has three components: behavioral control, responsiveness, and psychological autonomy-granting (Steinberg, Elman, & Mounts, 1989). Baumrind (1991) has written that parenting style can be thought of as a balance between "the claims parents make on the child to become integrated into the family whole by their maturity demands, supervision, disciplinary efforts and willingness to confront the child who disobeys" with "actions which intentionally foster individuality, self-regulation and self-assertion by being attuned, supportive and acquiescent to the child's special needs and demands." **In this study, we hypothesized that the balance parents strike between the components of parenting will be reflected in the relative importance they place on three sets of values: self-discipline, social happiness, and independence. It was predicted that Permissive parents, described as non-controlling, non-demanding, and relatively warm (Baumrind, 1971) will endorse a value cluster we call 'Congenial', highly valuing their children's personal satisfaction and social skills, and relatively less importance on self-discipline and self-restraint. Authoritarian parents, who are described as detached, controlling, and parent-centered (Baumrind, 1971) will endorse the 'Controlled' value cluster, which places relatively more importance on self-discipline while devaluing independence. We hypothesize that Authoritative parents, who balance high demands with warmth and provide clear explanations of their decisions, will place equal importance on self-discipline, child happiness, and independence. We call this value cluster 'Balanced'.** In each case, we have only hypothesized relationships between the defining characteristics of the parenting style and particular value sets associated with it. For example, although Authoritarian parents tend to be less warm than Authoritative parents, there is no evidence that they do not wish their children to be happy. Rather, Authoritarian parents see self-discipline as the route through which happiness may be attained. Similarly, Baumrind's conceptualization of parenting style is meant to capture variability in conceptions of parental authority within the normal range of involved parenting (Baumrind, 1971). There is little evidence that relatively uninvolved parents adopt this parenting style as a result of espoused values rather than as a default strategy. For this reason, we do not hypothesize any relationship between uninvolved parenting and value orientation.

Parenting can be measured through observation, through self-report, and through child-report. Parenting measures also differ in their level analysis. For example, the question of whether there are rules about doing homework is a more general question than one about which specific rules are followed. **We hypothesize that mothers' values will be most closely reflected in their own self-reports (because of the desire to present themselves positively in light of what they view as good parents) but will also be reflected both in objectively observed behavior and in child reports. In addition, we hypothesize that value differences will be less associated with global reports of parenting than with specific reports, because the specific reports are more sensitive to specific instances and choices where conflicts between values will come into play.**

## Methods

**Protocol:** The data used in these analyses were collected during the first wave of a 3 year longitudinal study of adolescents during the transition from middle to high school. Four types of data were collected during the first year. First, an in-school questionnaire was administered to participating 7<sup>th</sup> graders during school in two large group sessions. Students were asked questions about their academic performance and orientation, their relationship with parents and their parents' involvement in their schooling, and

background characteristics. Second, an unselected sample of mothers of these 7<sup>th</sup> graders were contacted and interviewed either in their home or at a mutual convenient location about their relationship with their child, the ways in which they encourage academic achievement, and their long-term goals for their children. All interviews were conducted by pairs of trained undergraduates or by an undergraduate and the primary investigator. As part of the interview procedure, mothers completed two sorts of a set of 72 personal characteristics (Nisan, 1986). In the unconstrained sort, mothers were asked to rate how important it was to them that their child have each characteristic as an adult. Ratings varied from Extremely Important to Not Important. In the constrained sort, mothers were then asked to choose the three most important qualities from among the characteristics they had rated as Extremely Important. They were then asked to choose the six and then the nine next most important qualities (18 in all). During the interview, an observer recorded the number of positive, negative, and neutral statements mothers made about the target child. Finally, a second questionnaire was left with the mothers who had been interviewed for the 7<sup>th</sup> grader to complete and return. This instrument asked adolescents more detailed information about their mothers' parenting practices and their own feelings about school and themselves.

**Subjects:** Recruitment letters were sent to the homes of all 7<sup>th</sup> graders attending a middle school in a semi-rural community in southern Pennsylvania asking their parents to allow students to participate in a study of parents' influence on school performance. Attempts were made to contact an unselected subsample of 87 mothers to recruit them for the second phase of the study. 84% (73 mothers) agreed to participate and were interviewed. All but one adolescent whose mother was interviewed completed the second questionnaire.

### Measures:

**Maternal Values:** The unconstrained value sort was used to ascertain the underlying structure mothers used in thinking about characteristics they hoped their adult child would possess. The constrained value sort was used to ascertain the relative importance mothers placed on different classes of characteristics. A principal component analyses with an oblimin rotation was used to reduce mothers ratings of characteristics in the unconstrained sort to 9 factors. These factors formed the basis of value sets. Individual characteristics were assigned to a value set if they a) had a positive loading higher than .5 on that factor and b) did not load higher than .3 on any other factor. Seven value sets had uniquely defined characteristics<sup>2</sup>. The importance mothers placed on each set was measured by the highest rating she gave to any individual item within that grouping in the constrained sort. Based on our hypotheses, cluster analysis was used to characterize mothers based on how highly they rated the importance of three value sets: emotional well-being (10 items, including happy, friendly), self-discipline (7 items: including disciplined, responsible), and independence (3 items, including independent, thinks for self). Mothers were assigned to one of three clusters: Congenial (placing a high value on emotional well-being and low values on self-discipline and independent), Controlled (high on emotional well-being and self-discipline, low on independence), or Balanced (high value placed on each).

Bergman (1988) and others have argued that under many circumstances it is preferable to eliminate participants whose patterning does not fit well into the pre-defined clusters rather than force membership into the classification scheme. Six mothers (1 Congenial, 5 Balanced) were identified as having a poor fit with their assigned clusters (distance from centroid greater than four standard deviations) and eliminated from the analyses. Examination of the patterning of their value scores showed that in each case, the outlying mother did not meet the conceptual definition on which the cluster was based. For example, the outlying mother placed in the Congenial cluster rated emotional well-being as only a two on a four-point scale. Similarly, each outlying mother placed in the Balanced category had a two-point difference between Independence (rated as Very Important) and either emotional well-being or self-discipline. The value patterning of all mothers retained in the sample fit the conceptual basis of their assigned cluster.

**Parenting style:** Parenting style was measured using the PSI-I (Darling, 1995) in which adolescents' rated their mothers on 2 dimensions of parenting: responsiveness and demandingness. Mothers who were rated above the mean on responsiveness and demandingness were classified as Authoritative, those high in responsiveness and low on demandingness were classified as Permissive, and those low in responsiveness and high in demandingness were classified as Authoritarian. Mothers who were rated low in both responsiveness and demandingness were classified as Uninvolved. As part of the interview process, mothers' completed identical measures of parenting style reworded to reflect their own self-perceptions. In both the adolescent and mother sample, limitations in the variability of responses reduced alphas from those previously reported (adolescents: responsiveness ( $\alpha = .62$ ), demandingness ( $\alpha = .68$ ); mothers: responsiveness ( $\alpha = .53$ ), demandingness ( $\alpha = .36$ ). In addition to a strong positive skew to mothers' response, the low alpha of mothers' self-ratings of demandingness appear to reflect real uncertainty about their parenting. Interviewers noted that mothers appeared conflicted when making generalizations about themselves (especially with regards to strictness and rule-setting), frequently indicating that they were unsure whether their answers were accurate. Interestingly, this

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Value sets included (in order of importance to mothers): emotional well-being (friendly, joyful), self-respect (self-respect, dignified), self-disciplined (disciplined, responsible), successful (job security, financially secure), intuitive (humanitarian, wise), independent (thinks for self, independent), exploration (willing to try new things, curious), and physical (athletic, active). One mixed factor (including high positive and negative loadings) appeared to capture physical/spiritual dimension and was divided into two: intuitive and spiritual.

conflict was not evident when mothers were asked about specific parenting practices.

**Positive and negative comments:** The frequency of spontaneous positive, negative, and neutral comments made by mothers about their adolescent during the interview were coded by an observer and tallied. During training using videotaped interviews, all observers achieved over a .80 correlation between number of comments made with the primary investigator and a 93% concordance between observer and primary investigator about whether an individual comment should be classified as positive, negative, or neutral.

**Parenting practices:** Adolescent and mother reports of parenting practices, including parents grade standards, involvement in education, use of rules, and response to good and bad school performance were measured using standard, identical measures administered during the survey to adolescents and verbally to mothers.

*Mother's involvement in education:* Students and mothers reported on the frequency with which mothers were involved in nine aspects of their children's education (example: helping with homework when asked, attending school functions). Response categories were "Never", "Sometimes", "Usually", and "Always". A composite index of involvement was formed by averaging across items (adolescent  $r=.79$ ; mother  $r=.27$ ). Three items within the scale were used to measure whether parents set homework rules ("Sets rules about when I do homework), televisions rules ("Limits TV or video games until schoolwork is done"), and knowledge of school performance ("Knows how I'm doing in school").

*Homework Rules:* Mothers were asked if their rules included completing homework at a set time, completing homework before other activities, completing homework before dinner, completing homework before bed, and whether they had any other rules about completing homework. A count was made of the number of rules mothers reported.

*Television Rules:* Mothers were asked if their rules included limiting the time of day adolescents could watch television, how long they could watch television, whether chores or homework must be complete before television viewing, whether they limited the type of shows adolescents could watch, and whether they had any other television rules. A count was made of the number of rules mothers reported.

*Strategies for gaining knowledge about school performance:* Mothers were asked whether or not they used each strategy for keeping track of their adolescents school performance: asking the child, the child tells them spontaneously, looking at papers, contact with teachers, report cards, and other. A count was made of the number of strategies mothers engaged in.

*Academic standards:* Mothers' minimal standards for acceptable grades were measured by asking mothers and adolescents what the lowest grade the child could get in each subject without the mother getting upset and averaging across academic subjects. Mothers' positive standards were measured by asking mothers what they considered a good grade for their adolescent in each of the major academic areas and averaging across academic subjects.

*Reactions to school performance:* Based upon measures of parental reactions to school performance (Steinberg, Mounts, et al), adolescents and mothers were asked how frequently they (or their mothers) respond to good and bad academic performance in each of ten ways. Responses categories were "Always", "Usually", "Sometimes", and "Never". The mean response to the set of items was used to assess the extent to which mothers reacted differentially to school performance (adolescent  $r=.76$ ; mother  $r=.57$ ) Following Steinberg, et. al, two subscales were developed to differentiate between emotional responses (4 items, sample: When I do poorly, my mother makes it clear she's not pleased; adolescent  $r=.64$ , mother  $r=.51$ ) and tangible responses (4 items, sample: When I do well in school, my mother rewards me by giving me extra privileges; adolescent  $r=.65$ ; mother  $r=.51$ ).

## Results

The association between adolescents' ratings of their mothers' parenting style and mothers' value orientations is presented in Table 1. Because we did not predict that uninvolved mothers would hold any particular value orientation, these mothers were excluded from the analyses. As predicted, permissive mothers were over-represented among those who held Congenial value orientations, authoritarian mothers were over-represented among those who held the Controlled value orientation, and authoritative mothers were over-represented among those who held the Balanced value orientation ( $P^2(4, N=54)=10.35, p=.036$ ). Authoritarian mother showed the greatest concordance between values and adolescents' perception of parenting style. Authoritative mothers were most disparate. Although most mothers ascribing to the Balanced value orientation were authoritative, only a minority of authoritative mothers ascribed to the Balanced value orientation.

Parenting Style	Mothers' Value Orientation			
	Congenial n (%)	Controlled n (%)	Balanced n (%)	Total n (%)
Permissive	7 (38.9)	5 (20.0)	3 (27.3)	15 (27.8)
Authoritarian	1 (5.6)	8 (32.0)	0 (0.0)	9 (16.7)
Authoritative	10 (55.6)	12 (48.0)	8 (72.7)	30 (55.6)
Total	18	25	11	54 (100%)

**Value orientation and mothers' behavior.** The mean numbers of positive and negative spontaneous comments mothers made about their adolescents are reported in Table 2. Although there was no difference in the number of positive comments mothers made (( $F(2,65)=.45$ ,  $p=.64$ )), mothers who ascribed to the Balanced value orientation made almost twice as many negative comments about their adolescents as did mothers in the other two groups (( $F(2,65)=3.54$ ,  $p=.035$ )).

	Mothers' Value Orientation			
	Congenial Mean (sd)	Controlled Mean (sd)	Balanced Mean (sd)	Total Mean (sd)
positive	20.05 (6.46)	21.28 (8.39)	22.69 (8.83)	21.17 (7.85)
negative	6.67 (5.38)	6.66 (6.53)	12.62 (10.76)	7.83 (7.5)

**Value orientation and parenting practices.** The relationship between mothers' values and mothers' and adolescents' ratings of mothers' parenting practices was tested using ANOVA. Mothers and adolescents were asked about parenting practices at two levels: relatively broad questions about parenting practices (for example, How often do you limit TV until schoolwork is done? (always, usually, sometimes, never) and specific questions that reflect the implementation of those general orientations (for example, Do you have rules about TV content? About the number of hours your children watch?) Results are reported in Table 3. Differences in maternal value orientations are reflected in neither the adolescents' nor the mothers' reports of general parenting practices (involvement in education, setting of homework or TV rules, knowledge of school, minimal acceptable academic standards or standards for what is considered a good grade ( $p>.10$ )).

In contrast, mothers' value orientations are reflected in mothers and adolescents reports of the specific ways in which these general practices were implemented. Although neither mothers nor adolescents both reported that mothers differed in terms of the frequency with which they had rules about homework, they did differ in the number of rules mothers said they had ( $F(2,65)=3.67$ ,  $p=.030$ ). Specifically, none of the mothers who held the Congenial value orientation reported that they required their adolescents to complete homework before dinner ( $F(2,63)=3.77$ ,  $p=.03$ ), although a substantial minority of mothers in the Controlled and Balanced groups did. Similarly, although all of the mothers ascribing to Balanced values and the majority of mothers ascribing to Controlled values reported that they required that homework be completed before bedtime, only 43% of the mothers in the Congenial group had this minimal requirement ( $F(2,65)=6.54$ ,  $p=.003$ ). Rules about television followed the same pattern, with mothers and adolescents reporting no difference in rules when asked about them generally, but mothers from the Congenial orientation reporting fewer specific rules, and limiting neither the content ( $F(2,65)=6.204$ ,  $p=.003$ ) nor the number of hours ( $F(2,65)=5.59$ ,  $p=.006$ ) their adolescents watched.

Mothers parenting practices in regards to academic performance also showed a similar pattern. Although both mothers' and adolescents' reported that mothers of each value orientation were similarly informed about how the adolescent was doing in school and had similar standards for good and bad performance ( $p>.10$ ), they did differ in the number of strategies they used to remain informed ( $F(2,65)=3.69$ ,  $p=.03$ ) and in their reactions to performance variations. Both mothers and adolescents reported that mothers with the Congenial orientation were less likely to react to good or bad performances (mothers  $F(2,64)=5.48$ ,  $p=.006$ ; adolescents  $F(2,60)=3.68$ ,  $p=.03$ ). Adolescents and mothers disagreed about the way in which these reactions were expressed, however. Mothers reported that their pleasure or displeasure was reflected in their tangible reactions ( $F(2,65)=5.19$ ,  $p=.008$ ), but not in their emotional responses ( $F(2,64)=.41$ ,  $p=.666$ ). Specifically, post-hoc analyses revealed that mothers holding the Congenial value orientation were less likely to change adolescent privileges as a result of either good or bad performance ( $p<.01$ ) than mothers having either Controlled or Balanced orientations. Adolescents, on the other hand, reported that mothers with different value orientations differed in their emotional ( $F(2,60)=3.81$ ,  $p=.028$ ), but not their tangible reactions to school performance ( $F(2,60)=1.11$ ,  $p=.338$ ). Post-hoc analyses showed that although adolescents reported that mothers were equally likely to react to good performance by communicating pride in them, ( $F(2,60)=.67$ ,  $F=.52$ ), mothers holding the Congenial orientation were less likely to communicate their displeasure in poor performance ( $F(2,60)=3.79$ ,  $p=.028$ ).

## Discussion

These results provide mixed support for the hypothesis that the goals mothers have for their children will be reflected both in their parenting style and in the practices they use to implement these goals. As hypothesized, mothers' goals were reflected in adolescents' perceptions of their parenting style. Mothers who placed a relatively greater importance on happiness than on self-disciplined behavior or independence were more likely to be described as Permissive. Mothers who placed relatively high importance on self-discipline while devaluing independence were more likely to be described as Authoritarian. Mothers who placed equal value on happiness, self-discipline, and independence were most likely to be described as Authoritative. That maternal values predicted adolescents' perceptions of parenting style and not mothers' own self-reports suggests both that these value orientations are reflected in suites of maternal behaviors that are communicated to the child and also that they are not due to differences in the way

that mothers of different value orientations seek to present themselves to interviewers. The finding that mothers who ascribed to the Balanced value orientation made an equal number of positive, but many more negative, comments about their adolescent during the interview suggests one process through which values may come to be reflected in adolescents' perception of their mothers' attitudes towards them.

More important, however, was the finding that mothers' goals were reflected in the specific practices through which goals were implemented rather than reports of general practices. The differences between mothers who held Congenial, Balanced, and Controlled orientations were only apparent when mothers were asked about specific types of rules, specific types of strategies, and types of reactions. In each case, mothers holding the Congenial orientation were less likely to say they engaged in specific practices to carry through on the general practices they reported engaging in. Mothers ascribing to the Congenial and, to some extent, Controlled value orientations were also less likely to communicate negative perceptions of their adolescents than were mothers who placed equal value on personal happiness, independence, and self-discipline. Mothers' use of specific rules to shape adolescent behavior and differential reactivity to positive and negative performance are two additional processes through which mothers' values and attitudes might be communicated to adolescents.

These findings are generally consistent with Darling & Steinberg's (1993) model suggesting that mothers' values will be reflected both in their parenting style and in their parenting practices. Additional research is needed to test whether their full hypothesis that one reason that child outcomes differ among parents who differ in parenting style is that the goals mothers of different parenting styles hold (and the way they implement those goals) also differ. Expanding the population studied is critical in this endeavor. The community in which this study was conducted is relatively homogeneous in social class, ethnicity, and, necessarily, region, all factors known to influence parental values. Although this homogeneity in some ways strengthens the study because it reduces confounding factors in a small sample and works against the hypotheses by reducing variability, it also limits the study's generalizability. Replicating these findings in a more ethnically, culturally, and socioeconomically diverse sample would enable researchers to study the extent to which ethnic and social class differences in parenting style reflect differences in values. More importantly, in light of the theory underlying parenting style, broadening the sample would allow researchers to examine the extent to which different groups implement the same parental goals through different parenting practices. Such research would have important implications for understanding group differences in the relationship between both parenting style and parenting practices with child outcomes. Alternatively, it is possible that the differences between the relationship between reports of general and specific parenting practices with maternal values reflects the differential measurement sensitivity of self-report data to broad and specific questions.

These findings underscore the importance of mothers' long-term goals in determining their behavior as parents. In addition, it provides suggestive evidence about some of the processes through which parents communicate their values and attitudes to their children. Examining the relationship between maternal values and parenting practices requires sensitivity to what values are and how they are thought to operate. Shared culture is defined through shared values. One would expect that within a culture there would be broad consensus about what mothers want for their children. Variability within a culture then, should come not in the absolute importance or evaluation of a particular quality, but rather in its relative importance compared to other highly valued characteristics. It is through those choices that goals are reflected in mothers day to day choices.

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Parenting Practices	Mothers' Self-Report of Practices				Adolescents' Perception of Mothers' Practices			
	Congenial Mean (sd)	Controlled Mean (sd)	Balanced Mean (sd)	Total Mean (sd)	Congenial Mean (sd)	Controlled Mean (sd)	Balanced Mean (sd)	Total Mean (sd)
Involvement in Education	3.04 (.40)	3.07 (.34)	3.13 (.41)	3.07 (.37)	3.16 (.39)	3.13 (.50)	3.11 (.53)	3.14 (.46)
Homework Rules?	2.90 (1.26)	3.31 (.97)	3.46 (.78)	3.21 (1.05)	2.67 (.97)	2.61 (.92)	2.69 (1.11)	2.65 (.96)
Number of Rules	1.52 (1.12)	2.03 (1.2)	2.61 (1.04)	1.98 (1.20)*	--	--	--	--
Before dinner	0.00 (0.00)	.25 (.44)	.38 (.51)	.18 (.39)*	--	--	--	--
Before bed	.43 (.51)	.59 (.50)	1.00 (0.)	.62 (.49)**	--	--	--	--
TV Rules?	2.05 (1.67)	2.19 (1.65)	1.83 (1.80)	2.08 (1.66)	2.86 (1.06)	2.88 (1.13)	2.83 (1.03)	2.86 (1.07)
Number of Rules	.29 (.46)	.38 (.55)	.85 (.69)	.44 (.59)*	--	--	--	--
Hours	.14 (.36)	.22 (.42)	.62 (.51)	.27 (.45)**	--	--	--	--
Content	.29 (.46)	.69 (.47)	.77 (.44)	.58 (.50)**	--	--	--	--
Good Grade	3.43 (.56)	3.45 (.53)	3.13 (.56)	3.38 (.55)	--	--	--	--
Minimum Acceptable Grade	2.50 (.67)	2.43 (.66)	2.44 (.56)	2.45 (.65)	1.96 (.99)	1.96 (.86)	1.44 (.78)	1.86 (.90)
Knows about School	3.24 (.70)	3.47 (.57)	3.31 (.48)	3.36 (.60)	2.62 (.92)	3.03 (.91)	2.92 (.95)	2.88 (.93)
Number of Strategies	3.14 (1.28)	3.69 (1.45)	4.38 (.87)	3.65 (1.35)*	--	--	--	--
Reacts to School Performance	2.29 (.25)	2.64 (.48)	2.63 (.29)	2.53 (.42)**	2.25 (.43)	2.59 (.59)	2.68 (.43)	2.50 (.53)*
Emotional Reaction	3.30 (.48)	3.34 (.61)	3.46 (.34)	3.35 (.52)	3.03 (.66)	3.44 (.54)	3.48 (.44)	3.31 (.59)*
Tangible Reaction	1.51 (.33)	1.99 (.63)	1.85 (.55)	1.81 (.57)**	1.84 (.70)	2.07 (.79)	2.19 (.53)	2.02 (.71)

\* p&lt;.05, \*\*p&lt;.01