

# Influence of Family Factors on the Formulation of Children's Psychological Problems

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**Abstract:** Every child grows up in the family. Parents' educational concepts, the family atmosphere, family members' relationship and parents' own quality directly affect children's mental health.

## 1. Introduction

As the saying goes, "Parents are the first teachers of children". However, many parents always concern about the health of their children, paying attention to their food, clothing and warmth. They try to improve the material conditions, but neglect the construction of a good family psychological environment, and ignore changes in children's emotional and psychological states, which lead to children's psychological problems. So, what are the main aspects of the influence of family factors on the formation of children's psychological problems?

## 2. Parents' Conditions of Worth on Children

The "condition of worth" is an important concept in client-centered therapy. Rogers believes that there are two value evaluation systems for everyone. One is the evaluation process based on one's innate inner feelings, the other is the self-evaluation process based on the evaluation of others. Everyone needs to be loved, recognized and accepted by others, and the satisfaction of these needs often depends on whether other people are willing to give satisfaction. Whether parents give their children care and respect depends on whether children's behavior meets their expectations, requirements and value standards. That is to say, parents' approval and preference for children are conditional. That is the condition of worth. However, such conditional satisfaction often contradicts children's own experience. In real life, children's desire for self-fulfillment is sometimes contradictory to their parents' wills. In order to obtain parents' care and respect, children have to cater to parents' desire, and suppress their real feelings. They will regard parents' expectation as the value condition to determine their behaviors. Slowly, children will internalize their parents' values; the values become a part of their self-concept. At that time, children do not evaluate or act out of their own inner feelings and needs, but evaluate and act based on the internalized values of others. Because this process suppresses the real wishes and needs of individuals, internal conflicts will arise. Children who are conditioned by value are afraid of making choices according to their own internal needs. They dare not please themselves, but are accustomed to giving up their own needs to meet the requirements of others and cater to others. In the long run, the children will feel tired and grieved. They suppress a lot of anger and discontent, and lose their passion and motivation.

The rule of conditional positive concern is that you have to do something (A) before I give you the reward (B). A is the requirement on children made by parents and other people according to their own value standards. B is the reward that parents give to their children. It can be material reward or oral appreciation. Under the effect of conditional positive attention, children will form the idea that, they can only be liked and recognized if they behave properly and meet the requirements of parents; otherwise they will be denied and rejected. In the process of interaction with parents and other people, children constantly learn and revise how they "should" do, and gradually form a set of external evaluation system. However, these "should" often go against the child's own will. On one hand, they think that they "should do this"; but on the other hand, the inner experience and feelings are painful and uncomfortable. Over time, children will gradually ignore or even suppress their

inner feelings and needs. They only pay attention to other people's expectations and views on themselves; they strive to please others, in order to get more material and spiritual rewards. Slowly, the children and their own internal experience are getting farther and farther. They even feel that they are not valuable as a person. Only when they satisfy their parents can they be valuable. This also leads to their low sense of self-worth. In the long run, psychological problems will arise.

### **3. The Absence of Father's Role Makes Mother and Child Overly Close**

As the old saying goes, "father is to blame for his son's faults." The role of father is very important in children's education. But in current era, "father's education for children" is very deficient. Although some families lack the role of father because of objective reasons, such as the sickness or death of fathers, or the fact that children are raised by mothers alone after divorce, we can also find that in normal families, fathers are far away from their children. These fathers fade away from family education on the grounds that they are busy with work, they need to support their families and they have no time to accompany their children. In many families, the father is busy with work and all kinds of entertainment like mahjong, television and online games. They become an invisible person in the family actively or passively. Mothers cannot get emotional needs from their husbands. Many mothers will place emotional needs on their children in that case, and slowly shift their emotions and attention from their husbands to their children. The mother and child are overly glued together. At that time, many children will replace the position of father and shoulder the responsibility of meeting the emotional needs of the mother. They need to be like a "husband". They should accompany the mother, comfort her, understand her, and listen to her inward grievances, sadness and dissatisfaction. Children have to behave properly, sensibly and considerately. They are no longer children; they are more like adults since they need to take care of the mothers who are more like children. In this way, children's own needs are suppressed, because they cannot live as freely as children. They suppress a lot of negative emotions, since these negative emotions cannot be expressed. So they are easily to become anxious and depressed, which will lead to psychological problems in the long run. When a child becomes a "small adult" and the "substitute husband" of the mother, the kid can't do what he wants. This part of need is hidden, and may be manifested through physical and mental illnesses when the child grows up. In addition, some children refuse to grow up in order to "be a good child of the mother forever". They depend on mothers excessively, and are unable to go out of the family and integrate into society. The "boomerang child" is a typical example.

### **4. Parents Have no Selves and Pay Too Much Attention to their Children**

Some parents do not have their own life; there is no meaning in their own life. They do not know why they live; they are lack of independent "selves". At that time, children become the only source of meaning in their lives. They need to acquire self-worth through their children; they need to achieve their own meaning and goals in life through their children. They will pay too much attention to their children and control them. So some parents stare at their children everywhere; they pay attention to every movement, every word and every expression of their children. They are always worried about their sons and daughters. They force children to eat when the kids don't want to eat anymore, since they do not want their children to be hungry. They force their children to dress more clothes when they the kids are not cold, since they do not want their children to get cold. They stare at what their children do every day and want to know whether their children are diligent or not. They hope their children work hard in study. They concern about children's friends, and keep asking questions like who they chat with and what they talk about. They also worry about children's learning situation. Puppy love is strictly prohibited. They become furious at the possibility that their children may learn bad behavior. At the same time, it is customary for them to criticize children. "Can you eat the meal properly?" "Can't you work as hard as somebody lived next door?" "Why don't you greet him? Don't you know that you need to be polite in front of elders?"... They want to grasp every opportunity to educate their children. They regard such behaviors as love, and they do

everything for the good of their children. But in fact this kind of “love“ makes it difficult for children to breathe. The excessive attention often leads to bad consequences. This excessive attention of parents deprives children of their freedom and makes them feel suffocated. Some children will become particularly mischievous and constantly make trouble, thus pushing the parents away so that they can get a little freedom. Others will completely abandon the requirement of their free space and independent self, and choose to cater to their parents’ needs. They become “good children“; their parents can invade their own space at will. They are obedient to their parents; they rely too much on their parents and have no opinions. Of course, it is also good to rely on parents. They do not need to make decisions on their own, nor bear relevant consequences. The children can blame parents when something goes wrong, and regard themselves as the victim.

## **5. Overemphasizing Education while Neglecting Relation**

Parents always hope that their children will be successful, prosperous and glorious. These expectations make parents pay more and more attention to children’s education. They even look forward to shaping their children according to their own wishes, forcing their children to learn specialties and attend all kinds of interest classes, tutorial classes and special classes regardless of children’s own personality characteristics as well as physical and mental development laws. They try their best to give their children the “best“ condition, but they do not know what the children really need. They are afraid that their children are not good enough. But in fact, these parents project their own inner anxiety on their children. Through forcing their children to constantly strive for excellence, parents can alleviate their own internal anxiety. In my own consultation experience, I once met such a girl, who was obedient and sensible when she was young, and was a typical “good girl“. She began to learn piano at the age of six. She had learned piano for nine years. Her parents sent her to piano lessons every weekend without hindrance. Each lesson costs 500 yuan. Her parents gave up their lives. They refused parties and gatherings, and dedicated them into the education. Every day, they accompany the daughter to do homework and practice the piano at home. The girl also behaved obediently. She did everything in accordance with her parents’ requirements. The girl made achievements: she passed the Tenth National level examination on piano playing. However, it was such a good girl who suddenly refused to go to school when she was in the third year of junior middle school. She lost her temper at home and smashed the piano. She swore fiercely that “I will never touch the piano in my life“. She thought that she had never been a child. In her life, she had to practice the piano, read and study every day. She never had fun, never lived for herself. She believed that she was not an independent person, but a puppet with string arranged by her parents. Now she is unwilling to live such a life, so she gave up piano. In this case, the girl first tried to please her parents, practicing piano and studying hard. But she suppressed her ideas and needs. She had to win in the highest grading test, get high marks, and try to attend key high schools and key universities. These put too much mental pressure on the “good child“, and led to her anxiety and depression. At last she gave up practicing and learning completely.

Many parents worry that if they don’t set rules and teach their children well, the children will become bad and even commit crimes when they grow up. So they stare at their children all day long to stop all “bad“ behaviors. They don’t allow their children to make mistakes, but they don’t know that children need to learn what is right from mistakes. They suppress children’s nature to play, and the possibility of children’s autonomous behavior. As a result, our children become the product of parents’ wills, rather than independent individuals. Various psychological problems are hidden in this process. With children’s growth, their self-awareness and strength also grow. Many “good children“ have strong feelings of opposing their parents after entering junior high school, senior high school and university. They deliberately behave against their parents’ will. Some children even treat their parents as enemies and do very bad behaviors. For example, on January 17, 2000, Li Xu, a senior high school student in Jinhua, Zhejiang Province, killed his mother. On February 14, 2016, Xie-yu Wu, a student of Peking University, killed his mother. It can be seen that many parents attach great importance to education. They do everything possible to provide superior material and learning conditions for their children, and try their best to correct children’s bad behavior, hoping to

make their children excellent. However, under such strong pressure, children cannot feel that they are loved, but controlled and enforced. The affection cannot get children's response, sometimes even becomes the root of family tragedy. Why? The root lies in the misunderstanding of family education: excessive emphasis on children's education and the neglect of relation between parents and children. As a result, the more parents attach importance to education, the worse the parent-child relationship will be. In bad parent-child relationship, the child is unwilling to be disciplined, while the parents are afraid. So they are eager to educate the child, which leads to fierce confrontation between parents and children. The failure of education is due to problems in relationship.

## **6. Conclusion**

In summary, parents' educational concepts, evaluation criteria for children, whether parents have an independent self, whether the husband-wife relationship in the family is close and harmonious, whether parents pay attention to the establishment of good relations between them and children and other factors directly affect the level of children's mental health.

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