MATERNAL CONTROL AND ITS ANTECEDENTS:
AN EXAMINATION OF MONITORING AND AUTONOMY PROMOTION
AS THEY RELATE TO PRIOR EMOTIONAL AVAILABILITY

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ABSTRACT

Parental control has been linked with both positive and negative child outcomes. Two distinct components of parental control, behavioral and psychological control, have been explored to establish their impact on the development of children. This study looks at behavioral control, or monitoring, as reported by mothers. In addition, autonomy promotion is examined from the child’s point of view. Autonomy promotion is one aspect of a larger concept, level of psychological control. This study had several purposes: to describe and quantify mothers’ reports of monitoring, to describe and quantify children’s reports of autonomy promotion, to confirm that these two variables are discreet measures of parental control, to examine possible relationships between parental emotional availability during the preschool years and parental control in middle childhood, and to examine demographic characteristics that influence emotional availability and parental control.

Two new instruments, the Parent Report of Behavioral and Psychological Control and the Child Report of Autonomy Promotion, were created for this study. Subscales from these instruments, the Parent Report of Monitoring subscale and the Child Report of Autonomy Promotion subscale, respectively, were used in this study. These measures were administered to 52 children, who were in fourth or fifth grade, and their mothers.
This primarily European American, community sample was well-educated with relatively high family incomes. The current study also explored emotional availability (maternal sensitivity, structuring, intrusiveness, and hostility) as possible antecedents to monitoring and autonomy promotion. These antecedents were assessed using the Emotional Availability Scales to evaluate mother-child interactions videotaped when the children were approximately three-years-old.

Scores for autonomy promotion, monitoring, and emotional availability were quite high for this sample. That is, the means on each of these variables were all in the higher, more optimal ranges. Autonomy promotion and monitoring were found to be unrelated, discreet measures of parental control. Child Report of Autonomy Promotion scores were positively related to child grade level. Parent Report of Monitoring scores were positively related to child gender, with girls receiving more monitoring than boys. Parent Report of Monitoring was negatively related to maternal hours worked. The only significant finding regarding the parental control variables and emotional availability was a positive relation between Parent Report of Monitoring and hostility. The findings of this study point to possible areas for future research, including an examination of parental control as it relates to child outcomes. Also, this study should be replicated with more diverse samples to address the issue of generalizability.
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The topic of parental control is especially salient today when parents feel uncertain about the safety of their children. High rates of gun-related violence, school violence issues, and national uncertainty after events such as September 11, 2001 leave many parents concerned about their children's well-being. Parents and researchers are examining ways parents can help protect children by providing optimal degrees of control while still allowing for necessary autonomous growth.

The issue of parental control presents many areas for investigation. Researchers look at the distinction between different forms of behavioral and psychological control. The relationship between parental control and child outcomes is also explored. A few researchers have even looked at the link between early parenting practices and later control related attitudes and behaviors.

The distinction made between behavioral and psychological control is an important one. Behavioral control, usually assessed by parental monitoring, has typically been associated with optimal outcomes, such as more secure attachment relationships (Kerns, Aspelmeier, Gentzler, & Grabill, 2001), less self-reported delinquency (Cernkovich & Giordano, 1987; Patterson & Stouthamer-Loeber, 1984), fewer police contacts (Patterson
& Stouthamer-Loeber), fewer behavior problems (Kilgore, Snyder, & Lentz, 2000),
greater cooperation (Kerns et al.), greater academic achievement (Crouter, MacDermid,
McHale & Perry-Jenkins, 1990), and less depressed mood (Barber, Olson, & Shagle,
1994). Monitoring has usually been defined as parental knowledge of a child’s
whereabouts, activities and friends (Dishion & McMahon, 1998; Jacobson & Crockett,
2000; Kerns et al., 2001). Recently, questions have been asked about the source of such
knowledge (Statton & Kerr, 2000). Researchers are wanting to know if this knowledge
comes from spontaneous disclosure on the part of the children or if parents are actively
seeking such knowledge. The researchers who found the relationships described above
used interviews, parent Q-sorts, child questionnaires and a telephone procedure developed
by Crouter et al. in which parents’ answers to questions regarding their children’s
activities on a particular day are compared to children’s answers. The current study will
conceptualize monitoring as active monitoring behaviors as reported by mothers.

Unlike behavioral control, psychological control has been linked to poor child
outcomes, including negative internalized behavior such as depression (Barber, 1996). On
the other hand, psychological autonomy granting, one aspect of the larger concept, level
of psychological control, has been important for defining authoritative parenting
(Lamborn, Mounts, Steinberg, & Dornbusch, 1991). Authoritative parenting is associated
with many positive child outcomes such as such as high self-confidence, low levels of
problem behaviors, high levels of psychosocial development and high academic
competence (Crockenberg & Litman, 1990; Lamborn et al., 1991). The current study will
assess autonomy promotion as reported by children in middle childhood.
The distinction between behavioral and psychological control has been studied by researchers for decades (Becker, 1964; Schaefer, 1965a, 1965b; Steinberg, Lamborn, Dornbusch, Darling, 1992). The different antecedents to these discreet forms of control, however, have been relatively unexplored. Pettit, Laird, Dodge, Bates, and Criss (2001) recently explored these antecedents. Behavioral control, monitoring, was found to be preceded by the enforcement of cultural standards through a normative, proactive parenting approach (Pettit et al.). Psychological control, on the other hand, was found to be preceded by harsh parenting and earlier maternal reports of child behavior problems (Pettit et al.). Psychological control has also been related to parental intrusiveness, demandingness, hostility, emotional manipulation, and constraint of child communication (Barber & Harmon, 2002).

Objectives of the Current Study

This study attempts to explore parental control and its possible antecedents. Two new instruments have been created to assess both psychological and behavioral control. Data has been collected from 52 children in middle childhood using a Likert-style questionnaire called the Child Report of Autonomy Promotion. For the present study, one subscale from this instrument, the Child Report of Autonomy Promotion subscale, will be examined. To be clear, autonomy promotion is being conceptualized in this study as one aspect of a larger concept, level of psychological control. Data has also been collected from the mothers of these children using a Likert-style questionnaire called the Parent Report of Behavioral and Psychological Control. One subscale from this instrument, the Parent Report of Monitoring, will be used in this study.
The Emotional Availability Scales (Biringen & Robinson, 1991) were used to evaluate mother-child interactions videotaped when the children were approximately three-years-old. The findings of these evaluations will be correlated with the measures of parental control to examine the dimensions of EA; parental sensitivity, parental structuring, parental nonintrusiveness, parental nonhostility, child responsiveness to parent, and child involvement with parent; as possible antecedents to parental control.

It is hypothesized that psychological and behavioral control will be unrelated, discreet variables. Also, well-educated, high-income mothers will receive high, more optimal scores, on the measures of autonomy promotion and monitoring. Finally, the dimensions of emotional availability will emerge as predictors of psychological and behavioral control.

With these hypotheses in mind, the following research questions guide the activities in this study: How will mothers’ reports of monitoring look in a well-educated, high-income community sample? How will children in such a sample describe their mothers’ autonomy promotion? Will the new instruments developed for this study show psychological and behavioral control to be unrelated, discreet variables? How are the various dimensions of emotional availability during infancy related to parental control in middle childhood? How are family demographic characteristics related to emotional availability and parental control?
CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

The link between parenting behaviors and child outcomes has been studied vigorously by researchers from many disciplines. Parenting behaviors are often described by varying degrees of warmth, acceptance, involvement, strictness, and control (Maccoby & Martin, 1983). When studying parental control, the focus of this paper, researchers usually make a distinction between psychological and behavioral control. The current study will explore the relationship between parental control as reported by mothers and their children. Antecedents to parental control will also be studied.

Parental Control

Psychological control emerged as a construct of interest in the work of Schaefer (1959, 1965a, 1965b) and Becker (1964). These researchers looked at psychological control as a negative means of controlling behavior by manipulating the love relationship. Parental tactics used include: appeals to guilt or pride, withdrawal of love, shaming, isolation of child, and expression of disappointment (Barber, 1996).

An early measure of parental control, Schaefer’s (1965a) Children’s Report of Parental Behavior Inventory (CRPBI), included the following factors: Acceptance versus Rejection, Firm Control versus Lax Control, and Psychological Autonomy versus
Psychological Control. Behavior scales used to assess the last factor mentioned include: Intrusiveness, Parental Direction, and Control through Guilt. These behaviors were chosen because they are "covert, psychological methods of controlling the child's activities and behaviors that would not permit the child to develop as an individual apart from the parent" (Schaefer, 1965b, p.555). This type of controlling takes advantage of the parent-child bond to intrude on the development and well-being of the child.

Another early researcher, Diana Baumrind (1971), examined overall patterns of parental authority. She devised the Parent Behavior Ratings scales to assess the behaviors of parents as observed by researchers during home visits and as reported during interviews by parents themselves. The PBR contains 75 items that consider 15 dimensions of parental authority. Maternal, paternal, and joint parent behavior clusters were created using BC TRY cluster analysis. These clusters were carefully examined to categorize parent behavior as authoritative, authoritarian, or permissive.

These categories have been used by a great number of researchers over the past several decades. These researchers have found authoritative parenting to be associated with the most optimal child outcomes, such as high self-confidence, low levels of problem behaviors, high levels of psychosocial development and high academic competence (Crockenberg & Litman, 1990; Lamborn, Mounts, Steinberg, & Dornbusch, 1991); authoritarian parenting to be associated with high obedience and conformity, poor peer skills, low self-esteem, low drug use and less school misconduct (Baumrind, 1991; Lamborn et al.; Maccoby & Martin, 1983); and permissive parenting to be associated with high self-confidence, high frequency of substance abuse, high levels of school misconduct,
highly immature behavior with peers, low academic competence, low responsibility and low aggression (Lamborn et al.; Maccoby & Martin).

Maccoby & Martin (1983) reconceptualized Baumrind’s original work by extending the categorizations to include an often overlooked style of neglecting/uninvolved parenting. This is an important style to identify, because of all the parenting styles, neglecting/uninvolved parenting has been associated with the worst child outcomes, including low psychosocial development, high internalized distress, and high school misconduct (Lamborn et al., 1991). Maccoby and Martin proposed a categorization of parenting style based on two dimensions, level of acceptance/responsiveness and level of control/demandingness.

Lamborn et al. (1991) completed a large study of 10,000 high school students that supported Maccoby and Martin’s framework. These students completed questionnaires that yielded three factors: acceptance/involvement, strictness/supervision, and psychological autonomy. The acceptance/involvement subscale evaluated the children’s perceptions of parental lovingness, responsiveness, and involvement. The strictness/supervision subscale evaluated the children’s perception of parental monitoring and supervision, concepts being explored in the current study. The psychological autonomy dimension was important for defining authoritative parenting but not for differentiating between the other styles of parenting.

Around the time Maccoby and Martin were reconceptualizing Baumrind’s categorizations, Epstein (1983) created the Mother-Father-Peer Scale (MFP). This 5-point Likert-type questionnaire (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree) was originally
intended as a retrospective evaluation to be used with adults considering their childhood peers’ and parents’ behaviors and attitudes. For the current study, items from this questionnaire have been adapted for use with children in middle childhood. The MFP includes dimensions of acceptance/rejection, independence/overprotection, and defensive idealization (Ricks, 1985). Researchers have found scores from the MFP to be positively related to other measures of psychological well-being including ego strength (Epstein) and self-esteem (Biringen, 1990; Epstein) and negatively related to anxiety (Biringen). Researchers have also found scores from the MFP to be significantly related to attachment representations of parents and maternal anxiety in adult respondents (Lutz & Hock, 1995).

Another early measure of parenting behaviors and attitudes was the Child Rearing Practices Report (CRPR) developed by Block (1965). This instrument initially consisted of 91 items measuring child rearing attitudes, values, behaviors, and goals. These 91 statements were sorted into thirteen groups by parents using a Q-sort format with seven levels (1 = most undescriptive of me to 7 = most descriptive for me). Analysis of these items yields between 28 and 33 specific factors with moderate to low reliability (Dekovic, Janssens, & Gerris, 1991). Subsequent researchers, Rickel and Biasatti (1982) modified the CRPR to include two factors (Nurturance and Restrictiveness) based on 40 items. They also converted the items from the original instrument into a 6-point Likert-type questionnaire without affecting reliability or factor structure. Dekovic et al. successfully replicated the Likert-type questionnaire with two factors using a Dutch sample. The Nurturance factor contains items that indicate a parent’s willingness to “share feelings and experiences with children and to show affection, acceptance, and responsiveness to the
child’s needs” (Dekovic et al., p.184). The Restrictiveness factor contains items that “are characterized by a high degree of control, setting narrow limits on the child’s behavior, endorsement of strict rules, requirements, and restrictions” (Dekovic et al., p.184).

Monitoring, a specific form of behavioral control, has been conceptualized as a form of supervision and control with an added dimension of tracking a child’s behavior from a distance (Crouter, Helms-Erikson, Updegraff, & McHale, 1999). Monitoring is usually defined as parental knowledge of a child’s whereabouts, activities and friends (Dishion & McMahon, 1998; Jacobson & Crockett, 2000; Kerns, Aspelmeier, Gentzler, & Grabill, 2001). Monitoring is one indication of how developmentally appropriate parents are in granting autonomy to their children (Bumpus, 2001). Patterson and Stouthamer-Loeber (1984) developed a, now widely used, measure of parental monitoring using a telephone interview procedure to assess the extent to which children’s reports of their experiences, whereabouts, playmates and activities during a particular day matched their parents’ reports of the same. Crouter et al. recently updated this procedure by removing items that were almost always answered correctly by parents, because they did not help discriminate between levels of monitoring, and by adding new items. Children and parents were telephoned on 7 separate evenings. They were separately, out of ear shot of one another, asked a series of questions about the child’s experiences, whereabouts, playmates and activities during that day. A follow up question was also asked for each item to ensure parental knowledge. Parents received a score of 2 if their original and follow up answer matched the child’s, 1 if the initial answer matched but the follow up question did not, and 0 is neither answer matched.
Researchers (Becker, 1964; Schaefer, 1965a, 1965b; Steinberg, Lamborn, Dornbusch, Darling, 1992) have been making a distinction between types of parental control for decades. Recently, however, Barber (1996) helped clarify this distinction between parental psychological and behavioral control as reported by children. To assess patterns of behavioral control in parents, Barber used a five-item, three point Likert-type scale based on the one created by Lamborn et al. (1991). In addition, Barber, administered Schaefer’s (1965b) revised Children’s Report of Parental Behavior Inventory (CRPBI) using the psychological control factor. After an analysis for ambiguity regarding certain items from the psychological control factor, which actually seemed to measure behavioral rather than psychological control, such as those regarding expected behaviors and rule enforcement, two items were removed. Barber’s intent was to contrast perceived psychological and behavioral parental control in a sample of 875 fifth-, eighth-, and tenth-grade students, and their relationship with depression and delinquency. As was expected, these two forms of control were related to very different outcomes in children. Psychological control was positively related to negative internalized behavior such as depression, while behavioral control, or monitoring, was negatively related to delinquency. Other researchers have also found high levels of monitoring to be associated with more secure attachment relationships (Kerns et al., 2001), less delinquency (Cernkovich & Giordano, 1987; Patterson & Stouthamer-Loeber, 1984), fewer police contacts (Patterson & Stouthamer-Loeber), fewer behavior problems (Kilgore, 2000), greater cooperation (Kerns et al., 2001), greater academic achievement (Crouter, MacDermid, McHale & Perry-Jenkins, 1990), and less depressed mood (Barber, Olson, & Shagle, 1994).
The different antecedents to behavioral versus psychological control were assessed by Pettit, Laird, Dodge, Bates, and Criss (2001). This team of researchers was one of the first to explore the distinct antecedents of these forms of control. Pettitt et al. conducted separate interviews with children and their mothers. Questions to tap behavioral control (e.g. “How much do your parents know about who your friends really are?”; “When your child is at a friend’s house, how often do you think that a parent or another adult is there?”) were embedded in both interviews. Considering the significance of the “eye of the beholder” when it came to psychological control, the researchers embedded questions tapping this type of behavior only into the adolescent interview (e.g. “My mother is always trying to change how I feel or think about things”). Behavioral control, monitoring, was found to be preceded by the enforcement of cultural standards through a normative, proactive parenting approach (Pettit et al.). Psychological control, on the other hand, was found to be preceded by harsh parenting and earlier maternal reports of child behavior problems (Pettit et al.). Psychological control is related to intrusiveness, demandingness, hostility, emotional manipulation, and constraint of child communication (Barber & Harmon, 2002). The current study also examines some possible antecedents of behavioral and psychological control.

Researchers are currently reinterpreting the construct of monitoring. Monitoring, as detailed above, is usually defined as parental knowledge of a child’s whereabouts, activities and friends. Until recently, however, researchers did not consider how parents obtained this knowledge. They assumed that such knowledge was a reflection of parental behaviors to acquire such knowledge. They did not explore the possibility that some
parents may have knowledge regarding their children not due to their own active efforts to monitor the children but through the spontaneous disclosure of information on the part of the children. Stattin and Kerr (2000) explored this possibility using a sample of 14-year-olds and their parents. The children and their parents responded to questions using a five-point Likert-type scale. The same questionnaires were administered to the children and parents with only minor wording changes so the questions made sense. Separate items were created to assess monitoring, with child disclosure, parental solicitation, and parental control as possible sources of this knowledge. Monitoring, defined as actual parental knowledge of children’s whereabouts, activities, and associations, was assessed using nine questions, such as: “Do your parents know what you do during your free time?” and “Do your parents know where you go and what you do after school?” Child disclosure was assessed using five questions, such as: “Do you spontaneously tell your parents about your friends?” and “Do you like to tell your parents about where you went during the evenings?” Parental solicitation was assessed using five questions, such as “How often do your parents talk with your friends?” and “How often do your parents ask about your free time?” Parental control was assessed using six questions, such as, “Must you have your parents’ permission before you go out during the week nights?” and “Do your parents require that you tell them how you spend your money?”. Stattin and Kerr found child disclosure to be the most significant source of parents’ knowledge, indicating that monitoring may be based more on dyadic interactions that simply active parental monitoring behaviors as had been previously assumed.
Kilgore, Snyder, and Lentz (2000) offer one of the few examples of a study that directly assessed active efforts on the part of the parents to acquire knowledge regarding children’s whereabouts, activities, and friends. Two sources of information were tapped in this study, parents and teachers. Parents used a Q-sort methodology to report their efforts to monitor their children. Some examples of items used include: “I keep my child away from bad influences in the neighborhood” and “I am careful about what my child watches on TV”. The Q-sort procedure was used because it reduces self-report bias and because it has been shown to be applicable across many SES, ethnic, and racial groups. The sample in this study consisted of African American children attending Head Start programs. Several of the items used in this study were converted to items to be used with a Likert-type scale in the present study.

A teacher-reported Parent Monitoring Scale, was also created for use in the Kilgore et al. (2000) study. The children’s teachers were African American with backgrounds similar to the families being studied. Their input prior to the study was used to define examples of monitoring to increase the cultural and racial sensitivity of this instrument. Teachers conducted home visits with the children. After the visits, teachers were asked to indicate if seven items had been observed or not observed during the visit. These items were summed for a possible score between 0 and 7. Some examples of observable behaviors include: “Parent tracks child’s behavior and whereabouts during the visit” and “Parent expresses awareness or concern about the influence of nonparental adolescents or adults”. The results from the Parent Monitoring Scale and the Q-sort procedure were combined to obtain a single score for the variable monitoring.
Although researchers are just beginning to examine self-disclosure as a child characteristic that may affect scores of parental monitoring on existing instruments, some researchers have examined other family characteristics that may affect monitoring and child outcomes. Crouter et al. (1990) found that monitoring is related to boys’ behavior but not girls’. Fathers, but not mothers, were more knowledgeable of their sons’ experiences than their daughters’ experiences when a child of each sex was in the family (Bumpus, Crouter, & McHale, 2001). Crouter et al. (1999) found that the mothers in their study were more adept monitors than fathers, employment status did not affect maternal monitoring, parents knew more about second-born children than first-born children, and fathers’, but not mothers’, knowledge about children was affected by child characteristics, such as expressiveness and socialibility.

**Emotional Availability**

The recent reconceptualization of emotional availability (EA) has its roots in previous writings on EA and attachment theory. Mahler, Pine, and Bergman (1975) described emotional availability as a mother’s supportive presence while her child autonomously explores the environment. The child, optimally, uses the mother as a point of ‘emotional refueling’. Emde (1980) originally used the term ‘emotional availability’ to refer to a therapist’s emotional responsiveness and attunement to a wide range of patient emotions and needs, both positive and negative. Emde and Easterbrooks (1985) described EA as a dyadic interaction between partners in a parent-child relationship.

Current researchers also look to early attachment theorists to help shape the concept of emotional availability. Bowlby (1969) and Ainsworth (Ainsworth, Blehar,
Waters, & Wall, 1978) both wrote extensively on the importance of maternal sensitivity
and responsiveness to the development of a secure attachment relationship. These
attachment theorists referred to a ‘secure base’ similar to the ‘emotional refueling’ point
described by Mahler et al. (1975) with an emphasis on maternal acceptance and physical
availability rather than emotional availability. In a healthy parent-child interaction, a child
moves toward this secure base for interaction and then moves away, independently,
confident that the parent will be available if needed (Biringen, 2000). Although emotional
availability plays a role in the development of attachment relationships, theorists of
attachment did not seek to directly assess this emotional availability. Rather, they looked
at child behavior, using assessments such as the Strange Situation Procedure (Ainsworth
et al.), as a reflection of previous maternal emotional availability.

Emotional availability has recently been studied extensively by Zeynep Biringen. In
collaboration with others, she created the Emotional Availability (EA) Scales to assess the
emotional availability of mothers toward their children and children toward their mothers
(Biringen & Robinson, 1991) through observations and evaluations. The EA Scales define
emotional availability not as an individual characteristic, but as a “relational construct
based on the behavior of partners in an interaction” (Zimmerman & McDonald, 1995,
p.148). This instrument examines the following concepts separately: maternal sensitivity,
maternal structuring, maternal nonintrusiveness, maternal nonhostility, child
responsiveness to parent and child involvement with parent.

As would be expected, numerous researchers have found a significant relationship
between emotional availability and attachment classifications (Aviezar, Sagi, Joels, & Ziv,
1999). Braungart-Rieker, Garwood, Powers, & Wang (2001) explored the extent to which parental sensitivity and infant still-face behaviors at 4 months predicted mother-infant and father-infant attachment classification at 12 months. The participants were primarily Caucasian, middle class, two parent families. When the infants were 4-months-old, mother-child and father-child structured play interactions in a laboratory setting were videotaped and evaluated using a 5-point parental sensitivity scale and a 7-point infant affect scale. A still-face episode was then evaluated using these measures. At one year, infant-mother and infant-father attachment classifications were assigned using the Strange Situation Procedure (Ainsworth et al., 1978). The results indicate that father-infant attachment was not predicted by measures at 4 months. Mother-infant attachment, however, was related to the measures at 4 months, particularly maternal sensitivity and infant affect. The idea that maternal sensitivity influences infant affect regulation which then affects mother-infant attachment was partially supported.

Easterbrooks, Biesecker, & Lyons-Ruth (2000) looked at the relationship between attachment security and maternal depressive symptoms in infancy and emotional availability in middle childhood. When the infants were 18 months, attachment security was assessed using the Strange Situation Procedure (Ainsworth et al., 1978). At this time, the mothers completed the Center for Epidemiological Studies-Depression questionnaire (Radloff, 1977). At age 7, a 5-10 minute reunion after an hour long separation was evaluated using the Emotional Availability Scales. Maternal depressive symptoms during Time 1 related somewhat to later sensitivity and structuring during Time 2. Security in infancy predicted maternal sensitivity, maternal structuring, maternal hostility, child
responsiveness, and child involving behaviors in middle childhood. The findings were strongest for securely and disorganized/insecurely attached children.

Zimmerman & McDonald (1995), using a very small sample, studied the relation between the various components of emotional availability in mother-infant dyads and other caregiver-infant dyads. Also, the relation between emotional availability within these different types of dyads was assessed. Every other month, infants were filmed in their day care center interacting with mothers, fathers, teachers, other infants' parents, and other infants for approximately ten hours over the course of a week. The study spanned a nine month period. The interactions were evaluated using the Emotional Availability Scales. Caregiver sensitivity, but not intrusiveness, was related to infant responsiveness and involving behaviors. Infant responsiveness and involving behaviors within the nonmother-infant dyads were not related to these variables within the mother-infant dyads. This important finding suggests that infants may not develop a global template of attachment based on interactions with their mothers, as is usually theorized.

Ziv, Aviezar, Gini, Sagi, & Koren-Karie (2000) explored the validity of the Emotional Availability Scales in a cross-cultural context. The participants were selected from Jewish mothers who gave birth to healthy, mature newborns in Haifa, Israel hospitals. When the infants were twelve months old, a six minute free-play interaction was videotaped and evaluated using the EA Scales. The standard Strange Situation Procedure (Ainsworth et al., 1978) and the attachment Q-set (Waters & Deane, 1985) were also administered at this time. Most mothers were rated sensitive (74%) and almost half (46%) were optimal structurers. Less than a quarter (21%) were intrusive and few (9%) were
hostile. Most (72%) of the infants showed high or moderate responsiveness and most (69%) at least moderately involved their mothers. The data showed attachment security relating significantly to maternal structuring and intrusiveness and also to infant responsiveness and involving behaviors. The findings support previous findings that optimal maternal emotional availability is associated with secure attachment. This study is important because it provides cross-cultural support for this theory. Maternal education and SES were significantly related to maternal sensitivity and hostility but not to maternal structuring/intrusiveness and the infants' emotional availability.

The relationship between emotional availability and other variables has also been studied. Maternal sensitivity has been positively correlated with marital quality (Corwyn & Bradley, 1999), maternal age (Kogan & Carter, 1996) and negatively correlated with maternal history of childhood sexual abuse (Biringen, 2000) and maternal depressive symptoms (Biringen, 2000; Easterbrooks et al., 2000). Emotional availability has also been related to self-esteem, anger management and investment in moral standards (Biringen, Matheny, Bretherton, Renouf, & Sherman, 2000) as well as adult attachment representations (Aviezar et al., 1999).
CHAPTER 3

METHOD

Participants

The participants in this study included 52 children and their mothers. These dyads were participants in a long-term study focusing on the emotional well-being of mothers and young children funded by The National Institute of Mental Health (Ellen Hock, Ph. D., principal investigator). The participants were initially recruited from childbirth education classes, obstetrical clinics, private physician offices, a women’s health center, and other community resources in Columbus, Ohio (Lutz & Hock, 1993). Between 1991 and 2002, 12 phases of data collection took place. The current paper will consider data collected when the children were approximately three-years old (1993-1994) and when they were in fourth or fifth grade (2001).

All mothers were married and expecting their first child when they agreed to participate in the study. All infants were healthy and born full-term. The participants studied in the present paper include 49 European American dyads, 2 African American dyads, and 1 Asian American dyad. During the first phase of data collection relevant to this study, the mean age of mothers was 31.8 years (range 21 to 45, SD=4.86). As of 2002, mothers’ mean level of education was 15.75 years (range 12 to 23 years, SD=2.20).
Some participant families changed structurally over the course of this study. By 2002, 45 mothers were still married to the father of their first born child, 6 were divorced and not remarried, and 1 was divorced and remarried. The mean combined annual family income, as of 2002, was $81,735 (range $22,500 to $165,000, SD=$32,772). The child participants consisted of 37 (71%) boys and 15 (29%) girls.

Procedure

First Time of Data Collection. Researchers contacted participants, who had already took part in previous sessions of this longitudinal study, by telephone and requested their participation in a videotaped visit to the Ohio State research laboratory. Mothers were told that the researchers were interested in understanding how toddlers interact with an unfamiliar person. If the mothers agreed to participate with their child, a reminded letter and directions to the laboratory were mailed following the telephone conversation.

When each mother and child arrived at the laboratory, they were greeted by a trained graduate student, the researcher, who briefly explained the procedure of the session. The mother was told that the session would be videotaped from behind a two-way mirror and was given several questionnaires to complete. The Ohio State University Human Subjects Consent Form was signed at this time. Each mother engaged in several minutes of small talk with the researcher, sometimes including the child.

The Bayley Scales of Infant Development (Bayley, 1969) were then administered to the child using the standard procedures. The mother sat directly next to the researcher and child, but was given no specific instructions about how much or how little to participate. Some mothers chose to fill out their questionnaires at this time and some
chose to wait. After this instrument was administered, a basket of toys was brought down from a cabinet for free play. The researcher then excused herself from the room and left the following written instructions for the mother, "The interviewer will leave you and your child alone for approximately one minute. When you hear a knock on the door, the interviewer will open the door and say, 'We need to speak with you for a few minutes whenever you are ready.' You should plan to be out of the room for your absence and you will be able to observe him/her through the two-way mirror while out of the room."

The researchers followed through with the instructions above. The child was observed through the two-way mirror by the mother. Some children opened the door to look for their mothers. The mothers asked these children to wait in the room while they talked to the interviewer. After approximately a three minute separation, the mother was told that the study was over and she could rejoin her child taking all the time she needed to get ready to go. The researcher remained outside the room during the reunion. Most mothers remained with their children for at least several more minutes while they completed their questionnaires or while the children played with the toys.

These videotaped interactions were evaluated, using the Emotional Availability (EA) Scales, 3rd Edition (Biringen, 1998) by three graduate student researchers, separate from those involved with the interviewing procedure. Before viewing the interactions for this study, the researchers were trained by Biringen's video training program. After the training, the three graduate students evaluated sample video-taped interactions, supplied by Biringen, using the EA scales and sent their results to Biringen. Biringen determined that the scores obtained by the graduate students showed high interrater reliability and
were consistent with the scores Biringen and her colleagues had obtained to assess the sample interactions. The scores of two graduate students were used to obtain interrater reliability, while the scores of the third graduate student were used for correlational analysis with other variables in the present study.

Second Time of Data Collection. Researchers contacted the participants by telephone during the Summer and Fall of 2001 to explain the nature of this study and schedule an appointment for a home visit (Appendix A). Participants were given the option to meet in a university office, but all families who agreed to participate chose to have the researchers come to their homes. All but five home visits were conducted by one of three researchers, all graduate students in the Human Development and Family Science Department at The Ohio State University. The remaining five visits were attended by two of these researchers to coordinate interview techniques and obtain interrater reliability on two instruments which are not being discussed in this paper.

The researcher met with the mother and child together to explain the procedure of the home visit, discuss the confidential nature of the study, have the consent form signed, and distribute a $30 gift certificate. The mother was given 2 packet of questionnaires and a demographics form (Appendix B) to complete while the researcher met privately with the child.

The researcher thanked the child for participating in the study. She further explained the confidential nature of the study reminding the child that only identification numbers, not names, were used on each instrument. The child was told that her parents would not see her answers. The following guidelines were used by each researcher:
If a child is hesitant, just allow the thought process to happen. Do not finish the child’s sentence, try to reassure the child about a particular response, or fill in the blanks for the child. Do not try to sympathize or make an answer feel right. You may reflect the child’s thoughts, but do not offer advice. Be a nonjudgmental listener. Redirect gently if the child gets off on a tangent.

Siblings and fathers were asked to allow the researcher and child privacy if they entered the area.

A brief interview with the child was conducted as a warm up to the personal questions that were later asked about the child’s relationship with his mother. This interview was preceded by a reminder to the child that no answer was right or wrong; the researcher just wanted to know how the child honestly felt. The interview included questions about the mother’s encouragement of autonomy through activity participation and the child’s reaction to these activities. The children were allowed to elaborate beyond the questions if they had more information they wanted to reveal. The results of this interview were not examined in this study.

After the interview, three cards were given to the child. These cards were marked ‘Not at all’, ‘A little bit’, and ‘Exactly’. The researcher then read the items from the Child Report of Autonomy Promotion to the child. The child was asked to point to the card that most closely matched the child’s mother for each item. For example the first item, ‘My mom encouraged me to make my own decisions’ might fit a mother not at all, a little bit, or exactly. The cards were used to help the children feel more comfortable answering.
Then, the child chose a gel pen to complete an additional questionnaire, not discussed as part of this study, and keep after the home visit. For privacy, the child was given a large, brown envelope to hold all her questionnaires after completion. The child was left alone to fill out the final questionnaire while the researcher met with the mother. The researcher gave the mother a packet of questionnaires for the father to complete and mail back if he was interested. The mother’s and child’s completed questionnaires were collected at this time and the researcher left.

**Instruments**

**Emotional Availability Scales.** The interactions in the laboratory were evaluated using the Infancy to Early Childhood Version of the Emotional Availability (EA) Scales, 3rd Edition (Biringen, 1998). Researchers using the EA scales observe caregivers, usually mothers, interacting with their children in laboratory or naturalistic settings. Separate scores are given in the following six areas of EA: parental sensitivity (1-9), parental structuring (1-5), parental nonintrusiveness (1-5), parental nonhostility (1-5), child responsiveness to parent (1-7), and child involvement with parent (1-7). For each scale, higher scores are associated with more optimal interactions.

Researchers using EA evaluate the interaction globally, with the context of the interaction in mind, rather than counting discrete behaviors. Clinical sensitivity to the subtleties of the interactions is important. For example, positive messages, such as encouragement during a puzzle task in a laboratory assessment, delivered with a bored sounding voice and flat affect would be interpreted by researchers as nonoptimal regardless of their textual content. Unfortunately, scores for Nonhostility can sometimes
be misleading. For example, a mother who is withdrawn but does not show any overtly or covertly hostile behavior or affect towards her child could still receive a high score for Nonhostility. This can be somewhat misleading because higher scores usually represent optimal interactions. In the situation just described, however, one would need to look at the whole of the EA scores to adequately assess the interaction.

The EA Scales considers emotional availability a dyadic interaction, measuring relationship variables not individual traits. To receive higher scores, mothers and children should have a synchronicity to their interactions. For example, a mother whose facial expression and tone appears affectively positive but not appropriately matched to the situation at hand would not receive a high sensitivity score.

Each of the six scales is scored separately, but the nature of the scales does not allow for each dimension to be completely separate. Because EA is a global measure, some overlap is to be expected. For example, a mother who is highly intrusive would not be able to receive a high sensitivity score by definition.

Child Report of Autonomy Promotion. The Child Report of Autonomy Promotion (Appendix C) was created for this study. This 23 item questionnaire contains statements regarding the mothers, which are evaluated using a three point Likert-type scale. Three cards were given to the child. These cards were marked ‘Not at all’, ‘A little bit’, and ‘Exactly’. The researcher then read each item to the child. The child was asked to point to the card that most closely matched his mother for each item. For example, ‘My mom respects my need for privacy’ might fit a mother not at all, a little bit, or exactly. The researcher recorded the child’s answers, converting the answers to a score of 1, 3, or 5.
The items on this instrument came from one of three sources. Items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, and 19 were used from the following items, respectively, on the Mother-Father-Peer (MFP) Scale, created by Epstein (1983): 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 9, 11, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 19, 21, 25, 26, 27, and 29. The MFP has been used in the past with adults to assess their retrospective evaluations of their relationships with parent and peers. Items 20, 21, and 23 from the Child Report of Autonomy Promotion were used from items 5, 10, and 20 on the Parental Bonding Instrument, adapted from Parker (1979) by Gamsa (1987). Item 22 was designed by Dr. Ellen Hock for this study. The current study will only consider the 13-item Child Report of Autonomy Promotion subscale from this instrument.

**Parent Report of Behavioral and Psychological Control.** Mothers completed the Parent Report of Behavioral and Psychological Control (Appendix D), which was created for this study. This 15 item questionnaire contains statements regarding the mothers' beliefs and behaviors regarding parental control. Each statement is evaluated using a five-point Likert-type scale, ranging from "not at all like me" to "exactly like me". An example of a behavior question is, "I am careful about who babysits my child". An example of an item assessing beliefs is, "I believe children should not have secrets from their parents".

The items on this questionnaire came from one of two sources. Items 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 10, 12, and 15 were statements used by Kilgore, Snyder, and Lentz (2000) in the Block (1965) Child Rearing Practices Report (CRPR) Q-sort procedure to assess monitoring. Rickel and Biasatti (1982) showed that a Likert-type scale could successfully be used with the statements from the CRPR without affecting its reliability or factor structure. Items 4,
11, 13, and 14 on the Parent Report of Behavioral and Psychological Control were used, respectively, from items 31, 70, 12, and 54 on the CRPR, Restrictiveness Subscale, adapted from Block (1981) by Dekovic, Janssens, and Gerris (1991). Items 5 and 9 on the Parent Report of Behavioral and Psychological Control were used, respectively, from items 45 and 39 on the CRPR Nurturance Subscale.

The current study will only consider the 4-item Parent Report of Monitoring subscale from this instrument. In previous research, monitoring has usually been defined as parental knowledge of a child’s whereabouts, activities and friends (Dishion & McMahon, 1998; Jacobson & Crockett, 2000; Kerns, Aspelemeier, Gentzler, & Grabill, 2001). Recently, questions have been asked about the source of such knowledge (Statton and Kerr, 2000). Researchers are wanting to know if this knowledge comes from spontaneous disclosure on the part of the children or if parents are actively seeking such knowledge. This study will conceptualize monitoring as active efforts on the part of parents to acquire knowledge regarding their children’s whereabouts, activities and friends. Items 2, 7, 10, and 12, from the Parent Report of Behavioral and Psychological Control instrument, make up the Parent Report of Monitoring subscale. These items, respectively, are “I am careful about who babysits my child”, “I set strict boundaries to keep my child away from bad influences in the neighborhood”, “I am careful about other kids my child plays with”, and “I am careful about what my child watches on television”.

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CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

The results of this study will be presented with respect to each variable of interest and the correlation between these variables. First, data collected during the most recent point of collection, including the Child Report of Autonomy Promotion and the Parent Report of Monitoring, will be discussed. These data were collected during home visits when the children were in fourth or fifth grade. Descriptive statistics and then correlational relationships with demographic variables will be presented separately for each instrument. Correlations between instruments will also be presented. Data from the Emotional Availability (EA) evaluations of mother-infant interactions will then be presented. Descriptive statistics and then correlational relationships with demographic variables will be presented. Finally, correlations between EA and the other measures will be examined.

Child Report of Autonomy Promotion

The current study considers the 23-item questionnaire, the Child Report of Autonomy Promotion (Appendix C), which was administered to children when they were in fourth or fifth grade. Statements regarding their mothers were read to the children. Children decided how accurately the statements described their mothers. The items were scored as 1 for ‘not at all’, 3 for ‘a little bit’, and 5 for ‘exactly’.
The Child Report of Autonomy Promotion instrument contains several subscales. One such subscale, the Child Report of Autonomy Promotion, contains 13 items. Only this subscale will be considered in the present paper. Scores on each item of this subscale were summed to yield a total score. Total possible scores, on the Child Report of Autonomy Promotion, range from 13 to 65. Total actual scores, for this sample, ranged from 33 to 63, with a mean of 52.46 and a standard deviation of 6.52. Cronbach’s coefficient alpha for this subscale was .68. The mean, standard deviation, and range for each item are presented in Table 3.1. The frequencies of each possible score (1, 3, or 5) are listed, per item, in Table 3.2.

A complete range of scores, from 1 to 5, was represented for 13 of the 15 items. The mean score for almost 70% of the items was above 4 on a 1 to 5 scale. All means were above three indicating that children scored their mothers as generally more optimal in their autonomy promotion. In fact, for 62% of the items (1, 2, 4, 5, 10, 21, 22, and 23) more than half of the respondents gave their mothers a score of five on a one to five scale.

It is important to examine the Child Report of Autonomy Promotion scores as they may relate to family demographics. Especially, in light of the fact that the autonomy promotion scores for this sample were quite high, any relationships that may offer an explanation should be explored. All the children were within one school grade level of each other. A trend was noted between grade and Child Report of Autonomy Promotion (r=.25, p=.08). No correlations were found among Child Report of Autonomy Promotion and maternal occupational prestige, child gender, family income, or maternal education.
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Note. <sup>a</sup> Represents the original location of each item in the full 23-item Child Report of Autonomy Promotion.

Table 3.1: Child Report of Autonomy Promotion (means, standard deviations, and ranges).
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Table 3.2: Child Report of Autonomy Promotion (frequencies of scores).
Table 3.2 (continued)

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<sup>Note.</sup> <sup>a</sup> Represents the original location of each item in the full 23-item Child Report of Autonomy Promotion Instrument.

Table 3.2: Child Report of Autonomy Promotion (frequencies of scores).
Parent Report of Monitoring

The current study also considers a questionnaire administered to mothers regarding specific dimensions of their parenting behaviors and attitudes. This instrument was administered to each mother when her child, who was also participating in this study, was ten-years-old. The full instrument is called the Parent Report of Behavioral and Psychological Control (Appendix D). This instrument contains statements regarding the mothers’ attitudes and behaviors related to parental control. The mothers decided how accurately the statements described themselves. Each item was scored as 1 for a ‘not at all like me’ response, 2 for an answer of ‘a little bit like me’, 3 for an answer of ‘somewhat like me’, 4 for an answer of ‘very much like me’, and 5 for an answer of ‘exactly like me’.

The 15-item Parent Report of Behavioral and Psychological Control instrument contains several subscales. One such subscale, the Parent Report of Monitoring, contains 4 items. Only this subscale will be considered in the present paper. Scores on each item of this subscale were summed to yield a total score. Total possible scores, on the Parent Report of Monitoring, range from 4 to 20. Total actual scores, for this sample, ranged from 10 to 20, with a mean of 16.77 and a standard deviation of 2.38. Cronbach’s coefficient alpha for this subscale was .68. The range, mean, and standard deviation for each item are presented in Table 3.3. The frequencies of each possible score (1, 2, 3, 4 or 5) are listed, per item, in Table 3.4.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item Number</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>4.69</td>
<td>0.51</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>3.85</td>
<td>1.13</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>4.10</td>
<td>0.86</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>4.13</td>
<td>0.71</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. * Represents the original location of each item in the 15-item Parent Report of Behavioral and Psychological Control.

Table 3.3: Parent Report of Monitoring (means, standard deviations, and ranges).

A reasonably good distribution of scores was obtained for all of the items. Parents reported themselves to be highly monitoring, with 3 of the 4 items receiving a mean score over 4, on a 1 to 5 scale. Again, the possible summed scores ranged from 4 to 20 for this subscale. The high mean of the summed scores (M=16.77, SD=2.38) would further indicate that these parents reported themselves to be highly monitoring.

It is important to examine the Parent Report of Monitoring scores as they may relate to family demographics. Especially, in light of the fact that the monitoring scores for this sample were quite high, any relationships that may offer an explanation should be explored. A negative trend emerged between maternal hours worked and monitoring \( (r=-.25, p=.08) \). A significant correlation existed between child gender and reports of monitoring, with higher monitoring scores associated with mothers of female children \( (r=.27, p=.05, 0=\text{male} \text{ and } 1=\text{female}) \). No relationship emerged between Parental Report of Monitoring and maternal occupational prestige, family income, or maternal education.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item Number&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>27</td>
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<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>17</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>6</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>31</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<sup>a</sup> Represents the original location of each item in the 15-item Parent Report of Behavioral and Psychological Control.

Table 3.4: Parent Report of Monitoring (frequencies of scores).

Correlation between Child Report of Autonomy Promotion and Parent Report of Monitoring

As predicted, scores from the Child Report of Autonomy Promotion instrument and the Parent Report of Monitoring instrument were not significantly correlated.
Emotional Availability in the Mother-Infant Relationship

Mother-infant interactions were videotaped when the children were approximately three-years-old. These videotaped interactions were later evaluated by observers using different ranges for each of the six Emotional Availability (EA) variables. For each variable, higher scores were associated with more optimal interactions. The mean, standard deviation, possible range, and actual range for each variable are presented in Table 3.5.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Possible Range</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maternal Sensitivity</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>6.21</td>
<td>1.42</td>
<td>1-9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maternal Structuring</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>3.93</td>
<td>0.94</td>
<td>1-5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maternal Nonintrusiveness</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>4.44</td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td>1-5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maternal Nonhostility</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>4.60</td>
<td>0.76</td>
<td>1-5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Responsiveness</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>5.51</td>
<td>1.49</td>
<td>1-7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Involvement</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>5.53</td>
<td>1.52</td>
<td>1-7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.5: Emotional Availability (means, standard deviations, and ranges).
In sum, the mothers and children in this sample were scored quite high in all areas of emotional availability. Observers gave especially high scores to this sample for the variables Maternal Nonintrusiveness and Maternal Nonhostility. A fairly good range of scores was represented for all subscales.

It is important to examine the relationship between emotional availability and family demographic characteristics. A negative relationship emerged between maternal hours worked and maternal sensitivity ($r=-.34$, $p=.03$). That is, mothers who worked more hours received lower sensitivity scores. A positive trend emerged between maternal education and maternal nonintrusiveness ($r=.28$, $p=.08$). That is, mothers with more formal education were less intrusive. No other relationships emerged between any of the emotional availability variables and demographical characteristics.

**Correlations between Emotional Availability and other Measures**

A relationship was hypothesized between the Parent Report of Monitoring and the Emotional Availability subscales. The only statistical relationship that emerged was a negative correlation between the Parental Report of Monitoring and Maternal Nonhostility ($r=-.30$, $p=.05$). In other words, mothers who reported themselves to be highly monitoring were also evaluated by observers to be highly hostile. A relationship was also hypothesized between the Children’s Report of Autonomy Promotion and the Emotional Availability subscales. No significant statistical correlation emerged among these measures.
CHAPTER 5
DISCUSSION

The discussion of this study’s statistical findings will be presented in terms of each variable of interest. First, the Child Report of Autonomy Promotion findings will be discussed along with relevant findings from previous research. Next, the Parent Report of Monitoring findings will be discussed along with relevant findings from previous research. A discussion will follow regarding the lack of relationship between these two measures and the importance of their discreetness. Finally, the relation between Emotional Availability and the other variables will be discussed. Throughout the discussion, suggestions for possible future research will be presented.

Child Report of Autonomy Promotion

The mean scores on this instrument were skewed toward the more optimal, high end. The children in this sample generally considered their mothers to be strong promoters of autonomous development. Although the means were quite high, a full range of scores was represented indicating that this instrument is capable of tapping a variety of responses even within a normative, community sample.

This instrument was administered when the children were approximately ten-years-old. At this age, children could possibly still be young enough to idealize the behavior of
their parents. This idealization may account for the high autonomy promotion scores given to parents. An important next step would be to follow this study up when the children are adolescents. As adolescents, they may be less likely to idealize their mothers, and the mean scores may be somewhat lower than during this time of data collection.

Other possible explanations for the high autonomy promotion scores may be found in the demographic characteristics of the sample. The mothers were generally well educated with a mean level of education of 15.75 years (range 12 to 23 years, SD=2.20). The mean family income was also quite high (M=$81,735, SD=$32,772, range $22,500 to $165,000). High levels of education and high family income may be associated with a greater degree of autonomy promotion. Within this sample, however, no significant correlations emerged among autonomy promotion, education, and family income. Perhaps a more diverse sample, including mothers with less education and lower family income, would have yielded more significant results for analysis involving income and education. A recent study that looked at psychological control, in general, also failed to find a relationship between psychological control and family demographic characteristics (Pettit, Laird, Dodge, Bates, & Criss, 2001). That study examined psychological control via an interview with primarily middle class, European American mothers and adolescents the summer preceding eighth grade.

All of the children, in this study, were either about to enter, or were currently enrolled in, fourth or fifth grade. For some of these children, fifth grade was part of a middle school. A trend was noted between grade level and the Child Report of Autonomy Promotion (r=.25, p=.08). This trend makes sense given that children who were preparing
to enter middle school would be granted greater autonomy because they would likely be developmentally ready to handle greater independence and because parents know middle school requires a significant amount of independent behavior on the part of children.

Interestingly, no relationship emerged between child reported autonomy promotion and gender. Previous research has explored the relationship between gender and autonomy promotion with other family characteristics, such as birth order and gender role attitudes, as mediating variables (Bumpus, Crouter, & McHale, 2001). These authors found girls to be granted more autonomy than boys when the girls were first born, but boys to be granted greater autonomy when parents held ‘traditional’ gender role attitudes. Bumpus et al. used a slightly older sample of children. Their children ranged from 12-to 15-years-old while children in the current study were approximately 10-years-old. Autonomy promotion may change somewhat by gender as children become adolescents and presumably more independent and more at risk for any potential problems that independence may create. All of the children in the present study were first born and gender role attitudes were not examined so the significance of these variables could not be explored like they were in the Bumpus et al. study. Those authors conceptualized autonomy promotion as decision making input. They assessed that variable using a questionnaire for parents and children about who was responsible for making specific decisions in the family, such as decisions regarding chores, homework, social life and curfew. The current study assesses autonomy promotion with somewhat more abstract questions, such as “My mom encouraged me to make my own decisions” and “My mom was overprotective of me.”
Parent Report of Monitoring

Parents reported themselves to engage in frequent monitoring activities, with 3 of the 4 items receiving a mean score over 4, on a 1 to 5 scale. The possible scores ranged from 4 to 20 for this subscale. The high mean of the scores (M=16.77, SD=2.38) would further indicate that these parents reported themselves to be highly monitoring. High scores on monitoring are generally considered more optimal. Researchers have found high levels of monitoring to be associated with secure attachment relationships (Kerns et al., 2001), less self-reported delinquency (Cernkovich & Giordano, 1987; Patterson & Stouthamer-Loeber, 1984), fewer police contacts (Patterson & Stouthamer-Loeber), fewer behavior problems (Kilgore, 2000), greater cooperation (Kerns, Aspelmeier, Gentzler, 2001), greater academic achievement (Crouter, MacDermid, McHale & Perry-Jenkins, 1990), and less depressed mood (Barber, Olson, & Shagle, 1994). The researchers who found these relationships used interviews, parent Qsorts, child questionnaires or a telephone procedure first developed by Crouter et al. in which parents’ answers to a series of questions regarding children’s activities and whereabouts on a particular day are compared to children’s answers. The current study conceptualizes monitoring very similarly to these other researchers, but the current method of assessing monitoring through a parent questionnaire is different. The current study does not attempt to examine correlations among monitoring and child outcomes in this sample, so it would not be possible, at this time, to determine if the current methodology would yield findings similar to those used by previous researchers. The analyses of child outcome variables and
their relation to the Parent Report of Monitoring may be an important next step toward establishing criterion validity for this new instrument.

Certain demographic characteristics, related to affluence, have been linked to monitoring. The high levels of monitoring found in this particular sample may also be due, in part, to family demographic characteristics. By 2002, most of the mothers (45) were still married to the father of their first born child, 6 were divorced and not remarried, and 1 was divorced and remarried. High levels of monitoring have been associated with married parents (Pettit et al., 2001). Pettit’s study contained a much larger proportion of nonmarried, noncohabiting mothers than the current study. A small, but significant, correlation was found between monitoring and marital status in Pettit’s study.

The high family income level of this sample (M=$81,735, SD=$32,772, range $22,500 to $165,000) may also account for the overall high levels of monitoring found in this group. High monitoring scores have previously been linked with higher SES status (Pettit et al., 2001). The link between SES and monitoring may be present because of a cultural “appropriateness”, in higher SES groups, of parenting behaviors that are measured as monitoring (Pettit et al.).

A negative trend emerged between maternal hours worked and monitoring (r=.25, p=.08) for this sample. This trend would indicate that mothers who work less report more vigorous monitoring of their children’s activities, whereabouts, and friends than mothers who work more hours. Conversely, this trend would indicate that mothers who work outside the home do not monitor their children as closely. Mothers’ work averaged 26.36 hours per week (SD=16.13) with a range of 0 to 55 hours per week. The noted trend may
have occurred because mothers who work outside the home have children who are used to more independent responsibility. These mothers may monitor their children less closely because they perceive their children to be more responsible and not requiring as much monitoring. This trend between maternal hours worked and monitoring, however, would be contradicted by other research that found work hours to have no direct impact on monitoring (Crouter, Helms-Erikson, Updegraff, & McHale, 1999). In fact, these previous researchers found maternal work hours to not influence mothers’ monitoring but to be positively related to fathers’ monitoring, a variable not examined in the present study. This impact of fathers’ monitoring would presumably be beneficial to children. Further research, with the current sample, may be necessary to assess the relationship among mothers’ work hours, mothers’ monitoring, and fathers’ monitoring.

A significant correlation existed between child gender and reports of monitoring, with higher monitoring scores associated with mothers of female children (r = .27, p = .05, based on 0 = male and 1 = female). This finding has also been found in previous research (Pettit, Bates, Dodge, & Meece, 1999; Pettit et al., 2001). Mothers may perceive their daughters as needing more monitoring to ensure their safety, while sons are seen as more capable and independent.


Not surprisingly, no relationship emerged between Child Report of Autonomy Promotion and Parent Report of Monitoring. The distinction between psychological and behavioral control was first made by Schaefer (1965b). In the current study, the degree of
psychological control is measured by examining autonomy promotion, while the degree of behavioral control is measured by examining monitoring. Psychological control has been found to be preceded by harsh parenting and earlier maternal reports of child behavior problems, while behavioral control has been found to be preceded by the enforcement of cultural standards through a normative, proactive parenting approach (Pettit et al., 2001). Because these variables have very different antecedents and because they are discreet variables, no relationship was expected or found.

An example of the discreetness of these variable would include the findings regarding gender. No relationship was found between the Child Report of Autonomy Promotion and child gender. This lack of a relationship is discussed above. The Parent’s Report of Monitoring, however, was significantly related to child gender. Parents’ behaviors and attitudes are likely affected differently by gender in the areas of psychological and behavioral control.

**Relation between Emotional Availability and other Measures**

The lack of relationship between any of the Emotional Availability (EA) subscales, especially maternal intrusiveness and maternal hostility, and the Child Report of Autonomy Promotion was surprising. Previous researchers (Barber & Harmon, 2002) found significant links between psychological control and intrusiveness and hostility. This would be expected, because intrusiveness is partially defined as a parent who does not grant developmentally appropriate autonomy to her child (Biringen, Robinson, & Emde, 2000). The lack of relationship may be due to the time lag between points of data collection. Emotional Availability was assessed when the children were approximately three-years-old.
old, while Autonomy Promotion was assessed when the children were approximately ten-
years-old. A mother, for example, who is not intrusive to a toddler may become intrusive,
and thus grant little autonomy, when that child enters middle childhood and begins to face
greater independence and risks. Concurrent assessments of each variable may have yielded
different findings.

Similarly, the lack of relationship between the EA subscale, structuring, and
Parental Report of Monitoring was surprising. Again, these variables were assessed
approximately seven years apart. The lack of relationship could be because skills required
of a mother to structure the environment for a three-year-old may be quite different from
the skills required to structure the environment, through monitoring, of a ten-year-old.

The only significant result, involving the EA Scales, that emerged was a negative
correlation between the Parental Report of Monitoring and Maternal Nonhostility \( r = -0.30, \)
\( p = .05 \). This result indicates that higher scores of monitoring are associated with greater
maternal hostility. Monitoring has not previously been associated with high levels of
maternal hostility. High levels of monitoring, as described throughout this paper, are
generally associated with optimal family characteristics and optimal child outcomes,
conditions not associated with high levels of maternal hostility. This could be due, in part,
to the way hostility is measured in the EA scales. Parents who are withdrawn, but not
overtly or covertly hostile, would receive an high score for Nonhostility. For example, a
mother with flat affect who interacted very little with her child, but did not show signs of
hostility, would receive an optimal Nonhostility score. Withdrawn, nonparticipatory
mothers may appear to be nonhostile, but they would certainly have different parenting
behaviors than nonhostile mothers who are more involved with and more sensitive to the needs of their children. A spurious finding, therefore, may be emerging. Mothers who are withdrawn from their children may not be involved enough to be hostile. Those same withdrawn mothers, may be the mothers who do very little monitoring of their children.

**Conclusion**

This study attempted to describe and quantify mothers’ reports of monitoring and children’s reports of autonomy promotion within a well-educated, high income community sample. Two new instruments, the Parent Report of Behavioral and Psychological Control and the Child Report of Autonomy Promotion, were evaluated as measures for these variables. These two measures were confirmed to evaluate discreet variables. Demographic characteristics related to parental control were also explored.

One goal of this study was to determine some possible antecedents of psychological and behavioral control. The dimensions of Emotional Availability in mother-infant interactions were examined as possible antecedents to parental control in middle childhood. At least within this sample, Emotional Availability did not appear to be a significant predictor of later parental control. Other measures should be examined to assess possible antecedents to parental control.

This study could possibly benefit from assessing the dimensions of psychological and behavioral control from both the perspective of parents and children. Interesting relationships may emerge if each variable was looked at separately from the points of view of parents and children. Other family members, such as fathers or parenting grandparents, could also be administered these questionnaires to determine if they monitor or
psychologically control children differently than mothers. The interaction effect of various
monitorers may influence child outcomes in ways that have not yet been explored.

The participants used for this study provide an opportunity to assess the validity of
the new instruments with a normative sample. This sample, however, is not representative
of many communities. This study should be replicated with a more diverse sample to
address the issue of generalizability. A sample that includes families with more
educational, income, marital status, and racial variation may yield different findings.

A great deal of information exists regarding this particular sample. Recent analyses
of additional variables are yielding interesting results. Parental control has been related to
dimensions of maternal separation anxiety. This suggests that some aspects of parental
control may be predicted by maternal personality characteristics. The home environment
has also been related, in these recent analyses, to parental monitoring. Thus, the parents in
this sample may be monitoring their children in a manner determined by the perceived
safety of the neighborhood. Further analyses of these variables will certainly yield helpful
information about parental control.

Finally, the new instruments designed for this study along with measures of child
outcomes should be used to collect data from these families as the children enter
adolescence. Relationships between parental control in middle childhood versus
adolescence may offer significant insight into the relationship between parenting attitudes
and behaviors as they change over time and the development of autonomy in young
people.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


APPENDIX A

TELEPHONE SCRIPT
Hello, this is ______________. I am an Ohio State University student working as a research assistant on Dr. Ellen Hock’s research project. Last spring you received some questionnaires and a letter from us letting you know we would be calling. We want to thank you for taking the time to fill out the questionnaires. We are calling now to arrange a time to meet with you and (insert child’s name), hopefully in the next couple weeks or so. I would like to fill you in on what we plan to do when we visit.

- As you remember, we are particularly interested in how you feel as a parent, and as your child grows older, how you feel about important aspects of parenthood, like schedules, discipline, or how many activities to participate in. We want to hear about your worries and disappointments as well.

- When we talk with (insert child’s name) we will be asking (her/him) about how (s/he) feels about school and (her/his) friendships. We will also ask about (her/his) perceptions regarding relationships with parents since we last spoke with (her/him) over two years ago.

- The kinds of things that you tell us are helpful in adding to our knowledge of challenges facing today’s families. In appreciation for your help with our project, we would like to offer your family a $30 gift certificate for merchandise at Media Play.

- We would be happy to have the two of you come to our offices at Ohio State or we would be also happy to come to your home, which ever is easiest for you.

(IF MEETING IS IN HOME) I will phone the day before our meeting to remind you of our visit.

(IF MEETING IS AT OSU) I will be sending you directions to our offices on the OSU campus. We will also provide an OSU parking pass. It is very easy to access the offices from 315 or Lane Avenue.

- May I verify your address and work phone? Thank you. I look forward to meeting you. Our number is 292-5639 in case you have any questions or need to reschedule this appointment.

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APPENDIX B

DEMOGRAPHICS FORM
Mother's Information Form - Time 12 NIMH, Fall 2001

ID Number: 
First Name of 10 year old child (study participant): 

What is his/her grade level in school now? 

What is his/her typical performance in academic subjects (Check one): Outstanding _____ Good _____ Average _____ Has problems _____ Poor _____

Your Current Marital Status: Married ______ Single ______
Divorced ______ (Date of divorce ____________ ) Divorced and Remarried ______
Widowed ______ (Date of husband's death ____________ )

Consider your current employment status.
If employed, how many hours a week do you work? ________ hours per week

What is your job/occupation? (Please report your job description in some detail).

__________________________________________

Please indicate your current annual income. (Check one)
Under 15,000 ( ) 45,000-60,000 ( ) 90,000-105,000 ( )
15,000-30,000 ( ) 60,000-75,000 ( ) 105,000-120,000 ( )
30,000-45,000 ( ) 75,000-90,000 ( ) 120,000 and above ( )

Consider your husband's current employment status.
If employed, how many hours a week does he work? ________ hours per week

What is your husband's job/occupation? (Please report his job description in some detail).

__________________________________________

Please indicate your husband's current annual income. (Check one)
Under 15,000 ( ) 45,000-60,000 ( ) 90,000-105,000 ( )
15,000-30,000 ( ) 60,000-75,000 ( ) 105,000-120,000 ( )
30,000-45,000 ( ) 75,000-90,000 ( ) 120,000-150,000 ( )

150,000 and above ( )
Please indicate the current family/household annual income. (Check one)
Under 15,000 ( ) 60,000-75,000 ( ) 120,000-150,000 ( )
15,000-30,000 ( ) 75,000-90,000 ( ) 150,000-180,000 ( )
30,000-45,000 ( ) 90,000-105,000 ( ) 180,000 and above ( )
45,000-60,000 ( ) 105,000-120,000 ( )

Please indicate the number of years of your education for each school period.
Public School ___________ (up to 12 years)
College ___________ years (undergraduate, up to 4 years)
Graduate school ___________ years
Total ___________ years

Please indicate the number of years of your husband’s education for each school period.
Public School ___________ (up to 12 years)
College ___________ years (undergraduate, up to 4 years)
Graduate school ___________ years
Total ___________ years

Considering those individuals who reside in your household:
How many brothers and sisters does your 10-year-old child have at this time?
Please indicate their age, gender, and biological vs. step brother/sister?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Biological vs. Step brother/sister</th>
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</thead>
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</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX C

CHILD REPORT OF AUTONOMY PROMOTION
CHILD REPORT OF AUTONOMY PROMOTION

I would like to talk with you to have you tell me about the kinds of things you and your mom do and think about. Think back to when you were a little younger and try to remember things about what you and your mother did together, how you got along, and what you felt for each other. For example, sometimes my mom and I had a lot of fun together but sometimes she made me angry and sometimes I felt disappointed. These are normal feelings for most children.

I want to let you know that whatever you tell me is totally private. We will not even put your name on this paper. We will use a number instead of your name on our papers.

Warm up questions
Did your mom encourage you to try new things, like meeting new friends, going to new places, trying new activities?

Were you ever a little scared or nervous when you first started these new things?

Does your mom usually let you decide these things for yourself (that is decide to participate in a new activity)?

Do you feel like your mom ‘babies’ you? Do you think she watches you too closely or is too worried about what you do?
Now I’m going to read a sentence to you. I would like to have you tell me if what I say is *exactly* like your mother, if it’s *a little bit* like your mother, or if it is *not at all* like your mother.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td>A little bit</td>
<td>Exactly</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**THERE IS NO RIGHT OR WRONG WAY TO ANSWER. I JUST WANT TO KNOW HOW YOU FEEL AND WHAT YOU REMEMBER. FEEL FREE TO STOP ME IF YOU DO NOT UNDERSTAND A WORD OR A QUESTION. HERE IS THE FIRST SENTENCE.**

1. My mom encouraged me to make my own decisions.

   *Is this *exactly* like your mom, *a little bit* like your mom, or *not at all* like your mom?*

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2. My mom helped me learn to be independent.

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3. My mom felt she had to fight my battles for me when I had a disagreement with a teacher or a friend.

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4. My mom was overprotective of me. (An example might be a mom who is so worried her child might catch a cold that she never lets him go outside in the snow. So, she was *too* protective.)

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5. My mom encouraged me to do things for myself.

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</table>
6. My mom encouraged me to try things my way.
   1 3 5

7. My mom allowed me to do things that other kids my age were allowed to do.
   1 3 5

8. My mom enjoyed being with me.
   1 3 5

9. My mom is difficult to please.
   1 3 5

10. My mom usually supported me when I wanted to do new and exciting things.
    1 3 5

11. My mom worried too much that I would hurt myself or get sick.
    1 3 5

12. My mom gets angry with me a lot.
    1 3 5

13. My mom says things that hurt my feelings.
    1 3 5

14. My mom does not like to have me around the house.
    1 3 5

15. My mom often does things for me that I could do for myself.
    1 3 5
16. My mom does not want me to grow up.
   
17. My mom makes me feel better when I am upset.
    
18. My mom encourages me to express my own opinion.
    
19. My mom believes that I cause her a lot of trouble.
    
20. My mom understands my problems and worries.
    
21. My mom respects my need for privacy.
    
22. My mom understands if I keep secrets with my friends.
    
23. My mom believes I cannot look after myself unless she is around.
    
*These items comprise the Child Report of Autonomy Promotion subscale.

b These items were used from the Mother-Father-Peer Scale (Epstein, 1983).

c These items were used from the Parental Bonding Instrument, adapted from Parker (1979) by Gamsa (1987).

d This item was newly created for this instrument by Dr. Ellen Hock.
APPENDIX D

PARENT REPORT OF BEHAVIORAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL CONTROL
PARENT REPORT OF BEHAVIORAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL CONTROL

Please read each statement and think about how closely that statement reflects your own beliefs and behaviors. There are no "right" or "wrong" answers; we are only interested in the extent to which you feel that each statement is descriptive of you.

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>not at all like me</th>
<th>a little bit like me</th>
<th>somewhat like me</th>
<th>very much like me</th>
<th>exactly like me</th>
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10. I am careful about other kids my child plays with.
   1    2    3    4    5

c  11. I do not allow my child to question my decisions.
    1    2    3    4    5

a,b  12. I am careful about what my child watches on television.
     1    2    3    4    5

c  13. I try to keep my child away from children or families whose ideas or values are
different from our own.
     1    2    3    4    5

c  14. I believe children should not have secrets from their parents.
     1    2    3    4    5

b  15. I don’t let my child play outside without watching him or her.
     1    2    3    4    5

These items comprise the Parent Report of Monitoring subscale.
These items were statements used by Kilgore, Snyder, and Lentz (2000) in the Block
These items were statements used by Dekovic, Janssens, and Gerris (1991) in the CRPR
Restrictiveness Subscale.
These items were statements used by Dekovic, Janssens, and Gerris (1991) in the CRPR
Nurturance Subscale.