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Parental Socialization of Emotion

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Abstract

Recently, there has been a resurgence of research on emotion, including the socialization of emotion. In this article, a heuristic model of factors contributing to the socialization of emotion is presented. Then literature relevant to the socialization of children's emotion and emotion-related behavior by parents is reviewed, including (a) parental reactions to children's emotions, (b) socializers' discussion of emotion, and (c) socializers' expression of emotion. The relevant literature is not conclusive and most of the research is correlational. However, the existing body of data provides initial support for the view that parental socialization practices have effects on children's emotional and social competence and that the socialization process is bidirectional. In particular, parental negative emotionality and negative reactions to children's expression of emotion are associated with children's negative emotionality and low social competence. In addition, possible moderators of effects such as level of emotional arousal are discussed.

For much of this century, a focal issue in developmental psychology has been the process of socialization. For example, the relations of parental behavior, beliefs, and affective reactions to children's compliance, moral reasoning, aggression, prosocial behavior, gender role development, and achievement have been of considerable interest to developmentalists (see Maccoby & Martin, 1983). Recently, with the resurgence of interest in emotion in nearly all areas of psychology, there has been increasing concern with the study of what has been labeled the socialization of emotion, especially the socialization of children's understanding, experience, expression, and regulation of emotion.

Of course, prior work on socialization sometimes includes reference to, or measurement of, emotional forces, processes, or outcomes. For example, for many decades, researchers have been concerned with the effects and correlates of parental warmth versus hostility or negativity on child outcomes (Maccoby & Martin, 1983). Moreover, for many years, an outcome of interest in research on socialization has been children's psychopathology, including internalizing and externalizing behaviors, that involve, to some degree, the expression and regulation (or lack thereof) of emotion. Nonetheless, until recently, few investigators have been concerned specifically with how parents and other socializers may affect children's understanding, experience, and expression of emotion.

The goal of this article is to provide a framework for organizing and summarizing a substantial portion of this emerging body of literature. Because the socialization of emotion is a multifaceted and complex process, our framework must be global. For each mechanism of

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[1]The exception may be for the literature on the relation of familial expressiveness to children's expression and understanding of emotion, topics reviewed by Halberstadt et al. (in press).

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emotional socialization, the processes and outcomes, as well as the factors that moderate any effects, are likely to differ somewhat.

Our primary focus is on parents' reactions to children's experience and expression of emotion. Parental reactions to children's emotions are an excellent example of ways in which parents can directly socialize children's emotion-related reactions. We also discuss the limited body of work on parental discussion of emotion, a behavior that often is part of parental reactions to emotions, but sometimes can occur independently of the child's expression of a specific emotion. In addition, research on familial or parental expressivity is summarized briefly; a much more comprehensive review of the empirical literature on the relation of familial and parental expressivity to child outcomes is available elsewhere (Halberstadt, Crisp, & Eaton, in press).

Our goal is to conduct an illustrative rather than comprehensive or meta-analytic review of the empirical literature related to the socialization of emotion and to highlight important conceptual and methodological issues. Given the diversity of methods and situations in which parental socialization of emotion has been examined, there are many factors that appear to influence or moderate its relation to child outcomes. However, when the domain is limited to research directly pertaining to parental reactions to, discussion of, and expression of emotion, the literature generally is not large enough for a detailed meta-analytic review in which the effects of even the most important moderators and variations can be assessed.' In addition, we note at the outset that much of the existing research is correlational. Thus, issues of causality cannot be resolved. This limitation in the literature should be kept in mind.

An understanding of the socialization of emotion has broad implications for social and emotional development because emotion-related capacities are believed to play a major role in the development of social competence (Eisenberg & Fabes, 1992; Hubbard & Coie, 1994; Saarni, 1990) and in many psychological problems (e.g., Casey, 1996). For the purposes of this article, we define emotional competence broadly. It includes an understanding of one's own and others' emotions, the tendency to display emotion in a situationally and culturally appropriate manner, and the ability to inhibit or modulate experienced and expressed emotion and emotionally derived behavior as needed to achieve goals in a socially acceptable manner. Because coping behaviors pertain to dealing with stress and emotion and often involve the regulation of internal emotional states (e.g., distraction) and emotionally derived behavior (e.g., the overt expression of emotion), we consider some types of coping to directly affect (and perhaps even reflect) the quality of emotional competence.

Moreover, because the literature on the socialization of emotional competence is limited and emotional competence is closely linked to social competence, in this article, we consider social competence, as well as emotional competence, as an outcome of parental attempts to socialize emotion. As noted by Rubin, Bukowski, and Parker (1998), there are as many definitions of social competence as there are researchers gathering data on the topic. However, Rubin et al.'s definition is satisfactory for our purposes: Social competence is defined as "the ability to achieve personal goals in social interaction while simultaneously maintaining positive relationships with others over time and across situations" (p. 645). Consideration of research on links between parental emotion-related socialization practices and social competence provides indirect evidence of the efficacy of socialization practices.

What is perceived as socially competent behavior varies somewhat with the context, subculture, and culture, as does emotional competence. Thus, a given outcome of socialization may have costs and benefits in regard to the child's social and emotional competence, depending on the context. Although certain parental emotion-related socialization behaviors (ERSBs) may tend to promote emotional and social competence more than others, the degree to which a given

ERSB promotes desirable outcomes depends on the definition of desirable, as well as what actually works to achieve social goals in acceptable ways in a given situation.

Different parents have different goals in regard to the socialization of emotion. For example, some parents believe that emotions, especially negative emotions, are bad and should be controlled and not expressed. These parents likely try to teach their children to minimize, ignore, deny, or prevent the experience and expression of negative emotion. Other parents feel that it is desirable to be in touch with one's emotions and to express them in socially acceptable ways; these parents are relatively likely to be supportive of children's expression of emotion (Gottman., Katz, & Hooven, 1997). Moreover, parental goals are likely to vary across emotions. For example, in some families (or cultures) it may be quite acceptable to ex--press sadness but not anger.

Because the goals of emotion socialization differ depending on who is the socializer, and beliefs regarding emotional expression and regulation differ across families and groups, it would be difficult to obtain agreement on what are positive modes of parental socialization of emotion and desirable consequences of the socialization of emotion. Nonetheless, many people, especially developmental psychologists, would agree that it is desirable for children to be able to express and regulate their emotions in socially desirable and valued ways. Thus, we view parental ERSBs that predict social competence (as defined by Rubin et al., 1998) as superior to those that do not, although it must be kept in mind that norms regarding emotional and social competence vary in different cultures (see Kitayama & Markus, 1994). When expressivity is not tied to social competence, there is likely considerable disagreement about the desirability of socialization practices and outcomes; for example, the encouragement of children's expression of negative emotion. Nonetheless, there is mounting evidence that the suppression of the emotional expression involves increased sympathetic activation of the cardiovascular system and, consequently, exacts a physiological cost (Gross & Levenson, 1997). Moreover, parental ERSBs appear to relate to children's physical health and achievement (Gottman et al., 1997). Thus, another criterion for evaluating parental emotion-related practices is whether they promote outcomes that foster versus undermine physical and mental health, as well as achievement.

A Heuristic Model

A simplified model of the general processes involved in emotion socialization, their outcomes, and moderators of central processes is presented in Figure 1. In any given socialization situation, it is likely that ERSBs are influenced by child characteristics (e.g., age and sex of the child, child's temperamental reactivity and regulation, child's typical reactions to discipline), parental characteristics (e.g., values, childrearing philosophy, parental regulation, and emotionality), and characteristics of the culture or subculture (e.g., cultural values about the expression of emotion or the role of parental childrearing practices in development). In addition, aspects of the specific context (e.g., the degree to which the child's behavior was inappropriate or the degree to which a given situation was salient and important to the child or parent) undoubtedly contribute to parental emotion-related socialization behaviors, including parents' expression of emotion. Later, we briefly discuss child characteristics as determinants and moderators of the socialization process. Due to limitations in space and the dearth of relevant empirical data, we do not emphasize most other inputs to parental choice of socialization-relevant behaviors, although it is important to acknowledge their potential role in the process of socializing emotion.

There are numerous types of parental ERSBs. The ones that we emphasize in this article are parental reactions to children's emotions, parental discussion of emotion, and parental expression of emotion. We believe that these ERSBs frequently affect the child's arousal level

in a given context, and that the level of arousal induced in a given context can influence the outcomes of ERSBs. For example, punitive parental reactions to the child's expression of emotion may induce anxiety about punishment, fear, or anger; supportive reactions may not increase, and may even reduce, the child's arousal. In addition, parental displays of emotion, even when they are not reactions to the child's emotion, can affect the child's arousal by contagion, vicarious processes, or through the meaning that the child attributes to the parental emotional display. For example, a positive emotional display by a child's mother can indicate that the mother is pleased with the child or that she is not going to fight with her spouse. Similarly, parental verbalizations about emotions can induce or reduce arousal. The arousal induced (if it is induced) may influence the outcomes of the parental ERSB, but, as is discussed next, this may not always be the case.

There are numerous possible effects of parental ERSBs, the most important of which include those listed in Figure 1. Parental ERSBs are likely to affect the following aspects of the child's functioning: (a) experience of emotion in a given context and, perhaps subsequently; (b) spontaneous expression of emotion; (c) regulation of emotion and emotion-related behavior in a given context; (d) acquisition of regulatory processes (e.g., the acquisition of ways to regulate behavior, the overt expression of emotion or to control the environment through instruction, modeling, etc.); (e) understanding of relevant emotions and regulatory processes; (f) affective stance toward emotions and oneself as an expressor of emotion (i.e., how the child feels about emotions and expressing emotions himself or herself); (g) the quality of the child's relationship with the socializer, at that moment and in the long term, as an accumulation of socialization experiences; and (h) schemas about the self, relationships, and the social world. In regard to the latter, Dunsmore and Halberstadt (1997) outlined a model concerning how a family's typical pattern of emotional expressiveness, in combination with child characteristics, cultural inputs, and a family's attributions about emotions and emotional expressiveness, influence the child's schemas about the self and the world.

Sometimes the effects of parental ERSBs on the aforementioned variables are mediated by arousal. The child's level of arousal is likely to affect his or her experience and expression of emotion, the degree to which the child initially processes information, the difficulty that the child will have regulating emotion, his or her affective response to the parent, and other outcomes. A basic assumption that underlies our interpretation of the literature is that social and emotional competence are partially based on individuals' abilities to regulate emotion and the behavior associated with emotional arousal. People who are unable to modulate the intensity, duration, and frequency of their emotional responses and emotion-related behavior are relatively likely to become physiologically over-aroused and to behave in ways that undermine the quality of social interactions. For example, they are likely to become self-oriented and to exhibit unregulated behavior (see Cummings & Cummings, 1988; Eisenberg & Fabes, 1992). In addition, when people are overaroused emotionally, they are unlikely to focus on and digest information about issues of importance in emotionally evocative social situations, such as socialization encounters (Hoffman, 1983). Indeed, it is likely, as argued long ago by Hoffman (1970, 1983), that parental socialization behaviors that are somewhat but not overly arousing provide the optimal context for learning and for the internalization of parental ideas, wishes, and values. Typical reactions to emotional overarousal appear to vary across individuals: Some people become highly inhibited or overcontrolled, whereas others seem to become undercontrolled (e.g., Block & Block, 1980; Kagan, 1998; Pulkkinen, 1982; Robins, John, Caspi, Moffitt, & Stouthamer-Loeber, 1996). However, both under- and overcontrol are likely to be associated with low levels of social and emotional competence (Block & Block, 1980; Eisenberg & Fabes, 1992). If these assumptions are true, it is logical to think about socialization influences in terms of their effects on children's arousal and developing regulatory capacities.

Thinking about children's regulatory capacities as mediators between parental variables and children's social competence is useful because socialization involves much more than direct transfer of skills from parents to children. For example, parents may teach children to express their emotions and to talk about emotions, but in many peer contexts it is not socially acceptable to do so. Thus, Gottman, Katz, and Hooven (1996) argued that children must develop social intelligence (Salovey & Mayer, 1990) or social moxie, which is applied to the specific context. Clearly, such social know-how involves not only know]ledge, but the ability to manage emotional arousal sc that one can consider and select appropriate social strategies and enact the behavior or emotional display that is socially appropriate to the specific situation.

The various outcomes listed in Figure 1 are viewed as influencing one another. For exanmple, improvements in the child's understanding of emotion may change the child's experience of emotion and foster the acquisition and utilization of regulatory strateg:ies. Moreover, children's perceptions about the quality of their relationship with the parent, both in the given context and over time, may influence how children respond to parental ERSBs and whether they are motivated to attend to the content of the parental ERSB. This, in turn, could affect a number of other outcomes. Moreover, if a parental ERSB helps the child to regulate his or her felt emotion or behavior, the child may be better able to express emotion appropriately and process information; may elicit more supportive parental reactions; and, as a consequence of these outcomes, develop more benign schemas about the self, relationships, and the world.

As can be seen in Figure 1, it is assumed that the outcomes of parental ERSBs affect the person's social competence, broadly defined. In addition, the individual's level of social competence ccan reciprocally influence the outcomes of ERSBs in contemporaneous and future interactions. For example, a child who has good social skills and knows that he or slhe generally can handle stressful social situations, in comparison to less competent children, may become less aroused in socialization contexts, may experience more benign emotions, and may be better able or more motivated to acquire new information and regulatory skills.

Finally, as depicted in Figure 1, there are many variables that are likely to moderate both the degree to which socialization situations are arousing to children and the degree to which various potential outcomes occur. Which moderators are relevant depend on the context and the specific ERSB. The moderators include:

1. The valence, type (e.g., anger or anxiety), intensity, and clarity of the child's experienced and expressed emotion.
2. The valence, type, intensity, and clarity of the parent's emotion.
3. The appropriateness of the child's emotional displays or emotion-relevant behaviors.
4. The appropriateness of the parent's emotional displays or emotion-relevant behavior.
5. The child's temperament or personality, especially his or her emotional reactivity and dispositional regulatory capabilities.
6. Whether the parental ERSB is directed at the child or someone else (e.g., the spouse or a sibling).
7. The child's sex.
8. Consistency of parental ERSBs.
9. Clarity of parental communication (e.g., in the parent's discussion or reaction to the child's emotion).
10. Whether the parental ERSB is proactive or reactive (e.g., in the case of facial expressions toward the child or discussions of emotions).

11. The child's age and developmental level.
12. The fit of the ERSB with the child's developmental level and other personal characteristics.

The role of some of these moderators has been discussed in other studies of socialization (e.g., Dunsmore & Halberstadt, 1997; Grusec & Goodnow, 1994) and not all are discussed at length in this review. Such discussion is precluded not only on the grounds of space, but also because these moderators have not been examined extensively in empirical studies. The list of moderators is not exhaustive; at the same time, some are included in Figure 1 primarily to denote variables to consider in future empirical and theoretical work and to stimulate thinking about the moderators of ERSBs.

Modes of Parental Socialization

There are numerous ways that socializers, including parents, can influence how children respond to and cope with emotionally evocative situations (Parke, 1994). Much of the existing research on parental socialization of emotion can be categorized into work on three topics: (a) parental reactions to children's emotions, (b) socializers' discussion of emotion, and (c) socializers' expression of emotion. These categories overlap but provide a convenient structure for organizing the empirical findings.

As previously noted, there is a large body of literature on the quality of the parent-child relationships; for example, parents' emotional tone with children, including their general warmth versus detachment or hostility (for reviews, see Maccoby & Martin, 1983; see also Bornstein, 1995). This literature is not systematically reviewed here because parental warmth is a global variable that usually involves a general style of interaction with the child rather than specific ERSBs. When parental expressions of emotion are directed specifically toward the child, they likely reflect the quality of the parent-child relationship, as well as mere expressiveness. Thus, measures of parental warmth and expression are somewhat confounded, although expressions of positive emotion usually are not the sole or defining feature of measures of parental warmth.

Because most of the relevant literature involves parents, we confine ourselves primarily to the literature on parental socialization. However, it is important to note from the onset that peers, siblings, nonparental adults, and the culture likely play significant roles in teaching children about emotion, its causes and consequences, and its expression and regulation.

Parental Reactions to Children's Emotions

In everyday life, children frequently express positive and negative emotions facially, behaviorally, or verbally. Socializers' reactions to displays of negative emotion, in particular, are likely to provide rich opportunities for emotion socialization. Socializers can react in supportive or nonsupportive ways to a child's negative emotion. For example, parents can avoid contact with the child or respond with negative, self-focused emotion, with actions that are punitive or minimize the legitimacy of the child's emotional experience, with attempts to comfort the child, or with efforts to teach the child ways to manage the emotion or the stressful context (e.g., Eisenberg & Fabes, 1994; Kliewer, Fearnow, & Miller, 1996). Moreover, parents can help infants and children to maintain an optimal or moderate level of emotional arousal by means of their reactions or can contribute to children's emotional overarousal (Nachmias, Gunnar, Mangelsdorf, Parritz, & Buss, 1996; Tronick, 1989).

It is important to keep in mind that most theorists and researchers focus on children's normal everyday negative emotions, not on emotional displays that are highly intense and inappropriate. It is likely that important moderators of the effects of ERSBs are whether the

child's negative emotional displays reflect relatively intense or problematic internalizing (e.g., sadness, anxiety, fear) or externalizing (e.g., anger, hostility) emotion, and whether the child's externalizing emotions are especially inappropriate or hurtful to others.

Research and theory with infants. In the early years of life, sensitive caregiving is believed to play a central role in the development of infants' effective emotional regulation (Kopp, 1989; Thompson, 1990). A component of sensitive parenting is how the parent reacts to the child's emotions. Tronick (1989) suggested that the mother's goal during face-to-face interactions in the first year of life typically is to maintain her infant's positive arousal and decrease the infant's negative arousal by means of the mother's own affective displays. In addition, investigators believe that mothers help infants to maintain an optimal level of arousal by pacing their activity level in response to the infant's cues (e.g., the infant's gaze aversion or negative signals). According to Kopp (1989), although infants have some ability to alter their own arousal level by using strategies such as nonnutritive sucking and orienting behaviors (R. Campos, 1989; Gianino & Tronick, 1988; Rothbart, Ziaie, & O'Boyle, 1992; Stifter & Braungart, 1995), the regulation of infants' states is primarily controlled by caregivers.

Although there are clear temperamental differences in infants' emotional reactivity in the first months of life (Gunner, Malone, Vance, & Fisch, 1985; Tennes & Carter, 1973; Worobey & Lewis, 1989), caregivers' interactions and responses to their infants' emotions appear to influence the way infants learn to express and regulate their internal states (Field, 1977; Gable & Isabella, 1992; Malatesta, Culver, Tesman, & Shepard, 1989; Stifter & Moyer, 1991). In much of the related work, investigators have focused on the notion of maternal sensitivity.

The construct of maternal sensitivity has often been operationalized in a manner that taps the frequency and appropriateness of mothers' responses to infants' emotional displays. Researchers have found that infants whose mothers were relatively responsive to their infants' changing emotional cues were less likely to react negatively and used more regulatory behaviors (e.g., gaze aversions) than did infants whose mothers were less sensitive to their cues (Cohn & Tronick, 1983; Field, 1981; Gable & Isabella, 1992; Stifter & Moyer, 1991). The links between maternal responsivity and infants' emotional behaviors have been demonstrated primarily in two contexts: during mother-infant face-to-face interactions and during day-to-day activities, particularly when the infant is distressed.

Mother-infant face-to-face interactions during the first year of life provide an important opportunity for parents to promote their infants' positive emotional expressiveness and facilitate optimal emotional regulation (Gianino & Tronick, 1988). Malatesta and her colleagues found that mothers tend to model positive emotional expressions (i.e., joy, interest, surprise) to their infants and rarely express negative emotions (e.g., sadness, anger) during face-to-face play (Malatesta et al., 1989; Malatesta & Haviland, 1982). Moreover, mothers respond to infants' affect expressions in ways that facilitate positive emotion and discourage negative affect (Capatides & Bloom, 1993), and there is some evidence that maternal contingent responding can affect the frequency and positivity of infants' expressed emotion, particularly in the first 6 months of life (Malatesta, Grigoryev, Lamb, Albin, & Culver, 1986; cf. Capatides & Bloom, 1993).

The responsive mother in face-to-face interactions with her infant is one who modifies her behavior in reaction to the infant's cues to maintain an optimal level of arousal in the infant (i.e., a level that stimulates the infant but is not overly arousing). In other words, in well-coordinated interactions, a mother attempts to facilitate her infant's positive arousal but also paces her activity level in response to the infant's cues (e.g., the infant's gaze aversion, negative signals). Thus, mothers may foster infants' emotion regulation through their sensitive behavior during these exchanges. In fact, researchers have found that infants whose mothers were

appropriately responsive during face-to-face, interactions displayed higher levels of positivity and more arousal regulation than infants whose mothers were less responsive to infants' cues (Gable & Isabella, 1992; Gianino & Tronick, 1988; Kogan & Carter, 1996). For example, Stifter and Moyer (1991) found that mothers who were rated as moderately active during a peekaboo interaction, reflecting an optimal level of activity, had infants who displayed more frequent and intense smiles than did infants whose mothers were low or high in activity level.

On the other hand, when mothers misread or ignore their infants' emotional signals during face-to-face play, infants begin to show signs of stress (Field, 1994; Gianino & Tronick, 1988; Kogan & Carter, 1996). For example, infants whose mothers provide too much stimulation during face-to-face interactions display less positive affect than do infants whose mothers provide somewhat less stimulation (Field, 1977; Gable & Isabella, 1992). Other work suggests that an underresponsive style of interacting also may cause distress in young infants (Gianino & Tronick, 1988). When mothers have been instructed to act in an unresponsive manner (i.e., to remain neutral while looking at their infant), their infants look away from them, increase in negativity, and use self-oriented regulation strategies such as thumb sucking, which are considered to be nonoptimal modes of regulation (Cohn & Tronick, 1983; Mayes & Carter, 1990; Stifter & Moyer, 1991).

Another context in which parental reactions to infants' emotions frequently have been examined is when the infant is distressed during day-to-day activities. Kopp (1989) noted that caregivers' responses during distress not only provide external support for emotion regulation, but also allow infants to make an association between the caregiver and relief from distress. Consistent with this view, there is some evidence that infants begin to make conditioned associations between their distress and the intervention of caregivers at a very young age. For example, Lamb and Malkin (1986) found that some infants (as young as 1 month ofage), at the sight or sound of the caregiver, would soothe before being picked up by an adult. Furthermore, infants between 4 and 5 months of age protested (cried more loudly) when their expectations were violated (i.e., the mother did not pick them up), a finding consistent with the notion that infants develop the expectation that their mother will soothe them when they are distressed.

Individual differences in caregivers' sensitivity to their infants' distress are thought to influence the child's immediate and long-term ability to regulate emotions. That is, when a mother responds promptly and effectively to her infant's distress, this experience is believed to modulate the infant's immediate arousal and to function as a learning experience for the infant (Bridges & Grolnick, 1995; Calkins, 1994; Cassidy, 1994; Kopp, 1989). Consistent with this line of reasoning, mothers' sensitivity and responsiveness to their infants' signals have been linked to a decrease in the level of infants' crying over the first year of life (Bell & Ainsworth, 1972; van den Boom, 1994). For example, Fish, Stifter, and Belsky (1991) found that infants who remained low in negative reactivity from birth to 5 months of age had more sensitive mothers than did infants who increased in crying over time. These findings support the argument that, with appropriate intervention, infants may become less reactive or acquire strategies to regulate their negative emotions.

Infants are believed to learn a style of dealing with emotion from their early interactions with parents. For example, attachment theorists have argued that the quality of the infant-mother attachment, which reflects a history of maternal sensitivity (including appropriate responsiveness to the infant's cues), influences infants' emotion regulation. According to Cassidy (1994), securely attached infants have mothers who are accepting of their displays of both positive and negative emotions; thus, these infants are likely to feel free to express a range of emotions and develop expectations that their needs will be responded to sensitively. As a consequence, these securely attached infants are thought to be flexible in their emotional expressions and to seek out the caregiver for assistance when stressed (Bridges & Grolnick,

1995; Cassidy, 1994; Thompson, 1990). In contrast, infants who form insecure relationships in response to a history of rejecting or nonresponsive interactions with their parents are hypothesized to learn to systematically minimize or maximize their negative emotions during stressful or frustrating circumstances. Some infants (insecure-resistant) are hypothesized to react to inconsistent parenting by displaying heightened levels of negative arousal in response to the distressing situation. Other infants (insecure-avoidant) may develop a strategy of overregulating their arousal and rely on nonsocial means (i.e., objects, self) to regulate their distress. Consistent with this argument, Braungart and Stifter (1991) found that infants classified as insecure-avoidant were more likely to use self-oriented regulation behaviors (e.g., thumb sucking) than were infants who had secure mother-infant relationships. Moreover, children with a secure attachment appear to develop a superior understanding of negative emotions. For example, securely attached children scored higher than insecurely attached children on measures of the ability to label others' emotions in puppet vignettes and in real-life situations involving peers' expressions of emotion (Laible & Thompson, 1997).

It is important to keep in mind that attachment status reflects more than parental responsivity to infants' emotions, and that it is likely that any relation between attachment status and children's emotional regulation could be due to a variety of factors, including differences in global parental warmth versus detachment or hostility that may be associated with particular types of attachments to the parent. Moreover, there is at least some evidence consistent with the argument that early temperament (e.g., irritability, intensity, soothability) or infants' emotional reactivity in experimental contexts predicts subsequent attachment behaviors or status (Calkins & Fox, 1992; Crockenberg, 1981), as well as mothers' contingent behavior and social behavior during interactions with infants at 6 or 12 months of age (Klein, 1984). Thus, it is likely that individual differences in infants' emotionality and regulation of emotion influence both parents' responsivity as reflected in assessments of attachment behaviors and parental ERSBs.

Moreover, individual differences in infant temperament appear to interact with maternal sensitivity, as reflected in attachment status, in predicting children's distress reactions. Nachmias, Gunnar, Mangelsdorf, Parritz, and Buss (1996) assessed 18-month-olds' stress reactions to novel events. Elevated stress reactions (as assessed by elevations in cortisol) were found only for toddlers who were both inhibited in their temperament and in insecure attachment relationships. Mothers in these relationships appeared to interfere with their toddlers' coping efforts, for example, by pushing their children to approach arousing objects. As noted by Nachmias et al., behavioral inhibition is one way inhibited children can regulate contact with frightening stimuli, and insensitive mothers may undermine their efforts to do so.

Despite the difficulty in assessing causal relations, overall the research with infants indicates that the way caregivers respond to their infants' emotional cues relates to infants' emotional behaviors. Mothers who are sensitive to their infants' distress, help them to maintain an optimal level of arousal, and induce or reinforce infants' positive emotion have infants who display more positive emotion and possibly use more optimal and age-appropriate emotion regulation strategies (i.e., ones that indicate that the infant can draw on human resources) than do infants whose mothers are less responsive. Infants provided with less support in dealing with emotions appear to start to rely on self-oriented regulation strategies such as thumb sucking, which are viewed as moderately adaptive for alleviating distress in some situations (Grolnick, Bridges, & Connell, 1996). Unfortunately, the implications of the use of self-oriented versus other regulation strategies early in life are not yet clear. It is quite possible that young children who feel that they can rely on a range of different regulation strategies-depending on the situation-cope best with stress. If children in insecure relationships feel that they cannot rely on others for assistance, they may have fewer options for coping with negative emotions, as well as less confidence that they are able to do so in some situations.

Research and theory with preschool and school-age children. A growing topic of research with older children has been the relation of supportive versus nonsupportive parental reactions to children's emotional reactions and their social competence. In general, investigators have suggested that socializers' negative, nonsupportive reactions to children's everyday negative emotions such as distress, fear, sadness, and anger are associated with negative social and emotional outcomes for children (Eisenberg, Fabes, & Murphy, 1996; Gottman, Katz, & Hooven, 1996). For example, Buck (1984) hypothesized that individuals who typically are sanctioned for the expression of negative emotion gradually, by adulthood, learn to hide their overt expression of emotion but experience heightened physiological reactivity in emotion-evoking contexts. In Buck's view, children who receive negative reactions to displays of emotion learn to feel anxious when in emotionally evocative situations due to prior repeated associations between punishment and emotional expressivity. Although hiding one's emotions is adaptive in a context in which emotional displays are punished, the tendency to respond with increased internal arousal may have physiological and emotional costs (e.g., Gottman et al., 1997; Gross & Levenson, 1997).

Somewhat consistent with Buck's (1984) thinking, Roberts and Strayer (1987) suggested that parental suppression of children's expression of emotion results in children storing negative affect in memory, along with maladaptive responses in the situation. Consequently, in subsequent similar situations, both the stored negative emotion and inappropriate behavior are elicited.

Building on Buck's theorizing, Eisenberg, Fabes, and Murphy (1996) proposed that negative reactions to children's displays of negative emotion are likely to heighten and extend children's emotional arousal in emotion-evoking contexts and, consequently, increase the likelihood of children engaging in dysregulated or nonconstructive behavior. As mentioned previously, parental practices that heighten or extend children's negative emotional arousal (both in the specific context and in future emotion-provoking situations due to learning) also would be expected to undermine learning about emotions and their management during emotional events (Hoffman, 1983). When parents discourage or punish children's expression of emotion, children may learn to view their own and others' emotions as negative or threatening and may avoid opportunities to explore the meaning of emotions and ways to deal with them.

Some of the aforementioned ideas, especially those of Buck, have been tested in research on empathy-related responding. To understand this and other research on empathy-related responding, it is necessary to define a few terms.

Empathy frequently has been defined as an emotional response stemming from the recognition of another' s emotional state or condition-a response that is very similar or identical to what the other person is feeling or might be expected to feel in the situation (Eisenberg et al., 1994). Sympathy, or feelings of concern or sorrow for another based on the recognition of another's emotional state or situation, often may stem from empathy, although sympathy sometimes may be the outcome of solely cognitive processes. Sympathy is believed to reflect an optimal level of emotional regulation (i.e., a relatively high level of regulation, but not so high that the child is overly inhibited and constrained). Consistent with this argument, sympathy has been positively related to measures of regulatory capacities in some studies (e.g., Eisenberg & Fabes, 1995; Eisenberg, Fabes, Murphy, et al., 1996; Eisenberg & Okun, 1996; cf. Eisenberg et al., 1994), as well as with altruistic behavior (Eisenberg & Fabes, 1990) and children's social competence (Eisenberg, Fabes, Murphy, et al., 1996), both of which likely involve some degree of regulation.

In contrast to sympathy, *personal distress*, which also may stem from empathy, is defined as a self-focused, egoistic reaction (e.g., anxiety, discomfort; Batson, 1991). We have argued that

it reflects empathic overarousal (Eisenberg et al., 1994; also see Hoffman, 1982). Personal distress reactions predict self-focused behavior; for example, people experiencing personal distress tend not to help others in need or distress if it is easy to escape the other person's presence (Batson, 1991; Eisenberg & Fabes, 1990). Consistent with the view that personal distress involves empathic overarousal and insufficient emotional regulation, children and adults exhibit higher skin conductance and heart rate, and sometimes exhibit more facial distress or fear and less concerned attention, in response to distressing compared to sympathy-inducing situations (Eisenberg, Fabes, et al., 1988; Eisenberg,Fabes, Schaller, Carlo, & Miller, 1991; Eisenberg, Fabes, Schaller, Miller, et al., 1991).

Consistent with Buck's theorizing, Eisenberg, Schaller, et al. (1988) found that parental leniency with regard to the expression of emotion was positively related to dispositional empathy (a measure that probably reflected sympathy and empathy), whereas parental restrictiveness was associated with the expression of facial distress during a sympathy induction (an index of personal distress). Recall that personal distress reactions are believed to reflect emotional overarousal and low levels of emotion-relevant regulation. In another study, Eisenberg, Fabes, Schaller, Carlo, et al. (1991) found that parents' reports of restrictiveness in response to children's expression of their own negative emotions were positively associated with elementary school boys' tendencies to experience personal distress rather than sympathy. Specifically, maternal emphasis on controlling emotions that were unlikely to injure another (e.g., children's own sadness and anxiety) was associated with relatively high levels of boys' facial and physiological (skin conductance and heart rate) markers of distress when viewing an empathy-inducing film. However, these same boys reported low distress in reaction to the film. Thus, boys exposed to negative parental reactions in response to their negative emotion seemed prone to experience personal distress (and related physiological arousal) when confronted with others' distress, but did not want others (or perhaps themselves) to know what they were feeling. It is likely that boys whose parents try to restrict their expression of negative emotions such as anxiety and sadness have difficulty dealing with these emotions in social interactions.

The effects of parental restrictiveness in regard to the expression of negative emotions may vary as a function of the nature of emotion and the child's age. The research by Eisenberg, Fabes, Schaller, Carlo, et al. (1991) is consistent with the view that parental restrictiveness in regard to children's negative emotions that do not harm others may foster overaroused and nonconstructive responses to negative emotion, perhaps particularly for boys. However, sometimes parental restrictiveness may serve primarily to enhance children's awareness of when it is appropriate to express various emotions and the effects of one's emotional displays on others. Saarni (1985) found that maternal reports of restrictive attitudes toward children's expression of emotion were related to children's high-level rationales for explaining how one decides whether or not to reveal one's genuine feelings. Children with restrictive parents may be forced to think about display rules more than other children or may be exposed to more discussion of them or their importance. In another study, same-sex parents' restrictiveness in regard to emotional displays that could be hurtful to others (e.g., staring at a disfigured person) was positively correlated with mid- to late-elementary school children's reports of dispositional and situational sympathy (Eisenberg, Fabes, Schaller, Miller, etal., 1991). Parents who were restrictive in regard to hurtful displays may have educated their children about the effects of their emotional displays on others' feelings. However, maternal restrictiveness in regard to the display of hurtful emotions also has been associated with kindergarten girls' (but not older children's or boys') physiological arousal, indicative of personal distress, in a sympathy-inducing context. Mothers who were restrictive in this regard with kindergarten girls were less supportive in general. Thus, for younger girls, who tend to be perceived by mothers as vulnerable to negative emotion (Fabes et al., 1994), such maternal restrictiveness may have reflected age-inappropriate restrictiveness or low levels of support (Eisenberg, Fabes, Carlo,

Troyer, et al., 1992), which might have fostered a tendency toward experiencing distress. These findings highlight the importance of considering the age appropriateness of parental ERSBs, as well as their embeddedness in a general style of parenting.

In general, however, nonsupportive parental responses to children' s negative emotions that are not especially harmful to others have been linked with negative outcomes for children. In a series of studies, Eisenberg et al. (1994; Eisenberg, Fabes, & Murphy, 1996) assessed parental self-reports of several nonsupportive reactions: (a) punitive (the degree to which parents respond with punitive reactions that decrease their exposure or need to deal with the negative emotions of their children; e.g., "tell my daughter that if she starts crying then she'll have to go to her room right away"), (b) minimizing (the degree to which parents minimize the seriousness of the situation or devalue the child's problem or distressed reaction; e.g., "tell my son that he is overreacting"), and (c) parental distress (the degree to which mothers experience distress when children express negative affect; e.g., "feel upset and uncomfortable because of my child's reaction"). Parental distress reactions are expected to elicit parental avoidance of the child or other nonsupportive reactions.

Punitive parental reactions tend to be associated with undesirable outcomes for elementary schoolchildren; these include low levels of adult-reported constructive coping (e.g., positive cognitive restructuring, seeking support) and high levels of avoidant coping (i.e., behavioral escape or avoiding thinking of a situation by attending to distracting stimuli or activities) in peer-conflict situations (Eisenberg & Fabes, 1994; Eisenberg, Fabes, & Murphy, 1996), and parents' and teachers' reports of externalizing problem behavior (e.g., "aggression," "stubborn," "breaks rules"), particularly for older boys (Eisenberg et al., in press). In pre-school and kindergarten, children exposed to punitive parental reactions to emotions tend either to escape or seek revenge in real-life anger situations with peers and do not tend to vent their emotion (e.g., do not cry or scream; Eisenberg & Fabes, 1994; Eisenberg, Fabes, Carlo, & Karbon, 1992). In another study using observational measures, parental negative reactions to children's emotions were associated with low levels of knowledge about emotion, but not with measures of children's emotions at school or overall social competence (Denham, Mitchell-Copeland, Strandberg, Auerbach, & Blair, 1997).

Parental minimizing reactions also have been linked to avoidant coping (Eisenberg, Fabes, & Murphy, 1996) and negative outcomes such as low levels of socially appropriate behavior at ages 4 to 6 (Eisenberg, Fabes, Carlo, & Karbon, 1992) and in Grades 3 to 6 (Eisenberg, Fabes, & Murphy, 1996), low levels of popularity and constructive coping skills (e.g., the use of positive cognitive restructuring and seeking support), low levels of comforting behavior toward infants for boys (Eisenberg, Fabes, & Murphy, 1996), and teachers' and parents' reports of externalizing problem behavior (Eisenberg et al., in press). In contrast, parental distress reactions have not been consistently related to adults' reports of social skills and coping behaviors used to deal with problems (Eisenberg & Fabes, 1994; Eisenberg, Fabes, & Murphy, 1996), although they appear to be associated with externalizing problem behaviors in elementary school (Eisenberg et al., in press) and children's behavioral avoidance or low levels of venting emotion when angered in preschool and kindergarten (Eisenberg & Fabes, 1994; Eisenberg, Fabes, Carlo, & Karbon, 1992). Although nonsupportive parental reactions seldom have been associated with all types of negative outcomes examined, the overall pattern is consistent with the view that there is a modest positive association between nonsupportive parental reactions and low levels of children's emotional and social competence.

Parents who report relatively high levels of nonsupportive reactions to children's negative emotions tend to view their children, especially sons, as prone to negative emotions (Eisenberg & Fabes, 1994; Eisenberg, Fabes, & Murphy, 1996; Eisenberg et al., in press). It is likely that the relation between nonsupportive parental reactions and children's characteristics and

behavior is bidirectional, such that difficult children elicit more negative parental reactions, and parental negative reactions also promote children's negative emotion and behavior (see Patterson, 1982). However, correlations between parental reactions and individual differences in child outcomes generally are not fully accounted for by individual differences in children's emotionality or regulation, especially at younger ages (Eisenberg et al., in press).

In contrast to nonsupportive parental reactions, supportive parental reactions (e.g., comforting, teaching constructive means of coping) would be expected to enhance children's attempts to deal constructively with emotions, as well as children' s readiness to learn about others' thoughts, feelings, and behavior in emotional contexts. Children who are provided with help reducing their emotional arousal or information concerning how to do so themselves may avoid becoming overaroused and dysregulated in their actions in emotional contexts. Furthermore, parental practices that teach or encourage children to deal instrumentally with negative situations may provide children not only with the means to cope with future stressful situations, but also with the confidence needed for successful coping in some contexts.

Parents' reactions to children's emotions also would be expected to contribute to the quality of the parent-child relationship, which may provide another pathway of influence on children's emotional responding and emotion-related social competence. Specifically, the quality of parents' ERSBs likely affects the child's emotional security, attachment to the parent, and feelings and cognitive schemas about social interactions, all of which probably influence the quality of children's emotion and behavior in social encounters (e.g., Albrecht, Burleson, & Goldsmith, 1994; Davies & Cummings, 1994; Thompson, 1998). Moreover, parental ERSBs may affect children's ability to orient toward others' needs. Bryant (1987) argued that distressing experiences increase children's self-concern and can undermine the development of satisfying social relationships, so that parents who buffer children from stress by acknowledging and legitimizing children's feelings of distress enhance children's empathic and prosocial development. Similarly, Tomkins (1963) suggested that children learn to express distress without shame and to respond sympathetically to others if their parents respond openly with sympathy and nurturance to children's feelings of distress and helplessness.

There is some evidence that supportive parental reactions are associated with positive outcomes for children, but these findings are less consistent or strong than are the data pertaining to nonsupportive parental reactions, especially for older children. During the pre-school years, parental self-reported, emotion-focused reactions have been correlated with constructive coping with real-life negative emotions (e.g., using words to deal with the situation; Eisenberg & Fabes, 1994) and teacher-rated social competence (the positive relation was moderate but marginally significant for peer-rated popularity; Eisenberg, Fabes, Carlo, & Karbon, 1992). Denham (1997) found that 4- and 5-year-olds' perceptions of their parents' comforting reactions to their negative emotions were positively related to teachers' reports of positive relationships with peers, cooperativeness, and empathy. In addition, Roberts (1994) found a positive relation between fathers' reports of comforting and children's prosocial and cooperative behavior and achievement orientation. By elementary school age, however, significant relations of such parental practices to coping and social competence are rare (Eisenberg, Fabes, & Murphy, 1996; Eisenberg et al., in press), although maternal emotion-focused (i.e., comforting) reactions have been associated with boys' comforting of an infant (Eisenberg, Fabes, & Murphy, 1996). Perhaps as children age, parents tend to comfort children less and encourage them to deal with their problems in more direct or complex ways (Eisenberg et al., in press).

There is evidence suggesting that parental emotion-focused reactions sometimes are associated with relatively high levels of children's negative emotions and behaviors and may be elicited by them, even in the early years. Denham (1993) found that maternal tenderness to 2-year-old

children's sadness was related to low levels of children's positive affiliation. Similarly, Grolnick, McMenamy, Kurowski, and Bridges (1997) found that mothers of 1- to 3-year-olds who used more reassurance and physical comforting had children who tended to be more distressed in a frustrating situation than were children of less reassuring mothers. These correlations dropped to nonsignificance when age and child distress in another context were controlled, suggesting that children's proneness to distress may have partially accounted for the correlations between parental comforting and child distress. Mothers may be particularly likely to calm children who tend to be sad, anxious, or shy and withdrawn, and such children would be expected to have deficits in their social skills (Strauss, 1988). Thus, the relation of parental emotion-focused reactions to children's socioemotional functioning may vary with the child's temperament, age, or developmental level.

Parental reinforcement and encouragement of negative emotional expression has been related to positive outcomes for children in a variety of studies, although the pattern of findings is not very strong. For example, parental reports of encouraging the expression of emotion have been associated with low levels of seeking adults' intervention (including tattling) or revenge in real-life situations with peers involving negative emotion (Eisenberg, Fabes, Carlo, & Karbon, 1992; cf. Eisenberg & Fabes, 1994). It also has been linked to high quantity of boys' comforting behavior (Eisenberg, Fabes, & Murphy, 1996), fathers' reports of children's constructive coping (Eisenberg, Fabes, & Murphy, 1996), and fathers' reports of low levels of externalizing problem behaviors for boys (Eisenberg et al., in press). Moreover, parental reports of discouraging the expression of emotion were related to low levels of preschool children's knowledge about situations involving anger (but not sadness, fear, or happiness; Garner, Jones, & Miner, 1994) and preschoolers' prosocial behavior, achievement orientation, and purposeful behavior (Roberts, 1994). In studies involving observational measures, maternal encouragement of the expression of emotion through high levels of positive responsiveness or low levels of negative responsiveness to the child's emotions has been positively correlated with preschoolers' understanding of emotions (e.g., Denham, Zoller, & Couchoud, 1994; cf. Denham et al., 1997) and teachers' ratings of social competence, albeit not with the valence of expressed emotion at preschool (Denham et al., 1997). However, for elementary schoolchildren, parents' self-reports of encouraging the expression of emotion generally were unrelated to mothers' reports of social competence, coping behavior, or problem behavior, or teachers' reports of social competence (Eisenberg, Fabes, & Murphy, 1996; Eisenberg et al., in press).

In a study in which mothers reported on their general tendency to be open to the expression of their child's emotion (i.e., the degree to which they encouraged their child to be open to experience and expression of emotion, whether they were nonpunitive, and if they were strict about sexual and self-expression), such maternal openness was associated with 4- to 5-year-old U.S. and Japanese children's reported anger and aggression in hypothetical distress or conflict situations and observed anger reactions while discussing the dilemmas (Zahn-Waxler, Friedman, Cole, Mizuta, & Hiruma, 1996). The measure of expression of emotion in this study was very general and may have reflected a general nonpunitive style. Nonetheless, parental encouragement of the expression of emotion may be associated with undesirable externalizing reactions in some situations.

In fact, there is limited evidence that, in Western cultures, an optimal, moderate level of parental encouragement of the expression of emotion promotes a level of emotional expressivity associated with high-quality social functioning. Roberts and Strayer (1987) found that a moderate level of observed parental encouragement of the expression of negative affect and paternal (but not maternal) report of encouraging the expression of emotion were positively associated with preschoolers' social competence. Nonetheless, the decline in children's social competence at high levels of parental encouragement was small. In other work with- slightly

older children, however, this effect was not replicated when predicting quality of coping or social skills, although moderate levels of maternal and paternal encouragement of the expression of emotion have been related to high quantity or quality of girls', but not boys', comforting of a crying infant (Eisenberg, Fabes, & Murphy, 1996).

Thus, at this time, the overall pattern of findings is consistent with the conclusion that moderately high levels of encouragement of the expression of emotion are associated with positive socioemotional development for children. However, this relation is not strong or consistent, and sometimes encouragement of the expression of emotion may be linked to children's expression of anger and aggression.

The degree to which parental encouragement of the expression of emotion is related to positive outcomes with children probably varies as a function of whether parents differentiate between socially acceptable and unacceptable expression of emotion and the degree to which such parental encouragement is combined with parental attempts to teach children positive ways to deal with their emotions. In fact, parental awareness and encouragement of the expression of emotion appear to be aspects of parents' general metatheory or philosophy of emotion (Gottman et al., 1996). Gottman et al. assessed two aspects of parents' metatheory of emotion: (a) coaching, which reflects high levels of parental involvement with, and concern about, the child when he or she is emotionally aroused; and (b) awareness, which taps parental awareness of emotion, the ability to talk differentially about nuances of emotion and emotion intensity, and the belief that emotions should not be stifled. Coaching parents were defined as "showing respect for the child' s experience of ... emotion (i.e., accepting the emotion when the child is upset, ... at times comforting the child during the emotion, teaching the child appropriate rules for expressing the emotion, educating the child about the nature of emotion ..." (p. 49). Coaching parents value children's emotions, are willing to share them with their children, and feel that they are an important experience in life.

When the children in the Gottman et al. (1996) study were 4 or 5 years old, parents were interviewed about their own experience of sadness and anger; their philosophy of emotion expression and regulation; and their feelings, attitudes, and behavior pertaining to their children's anger and sadness. Children's physiological responding during films and during parent-child interactions were assessed at the same age. Moreover, parental derogatory and scaffolding or praising behaviors were coded from parent-child interactions. Approximately 3 years later, teachers' reports of aggression and negative interactions with peers were obtained. As discussed previously, parents who were high on coaching had children who were physiologically well regulated (in terms of cardiac vagal tone), and physiological regulation predicted parents' reports of not having to assist the child in regulating negative emotion, inappropriate negative behavior, and overexcitement at age 8. Children's ability to bring down their arousal (rather than the parent having to help them do so), in turn, predicted higher quality peer interactions and less negative emotionality and problem behavior (as rated by parents and teachers). Moreover, parental coaching was negatively associated with derogation, and derogation predicted problems in peer interactions and negative emotionality (e.g., in structural equation models, both derogation and children's regulation mediated the relation between parental coaching and negative peer interactions). There was some evidence that parental awareness had a direct effect on quality of peer interactions and degree of negative emotionality, whereas parental scaffolding or praising (parental affection, engagement, positive structuring, responsiveness, and enthusiasm) in parent-child interactions was unrelated to either children's regulation or negativity of their peer interactions. The pattern of findings was more consistent when constructs reflecting regulation were in the model than when zero-order correlations between parental coaching or awareness and child outcomes were computed.

Thus, Gottman et al.'s (1996) findings support the view that parental acceptance of the expression of emotion, when embedded in a positive and constructive philosophy of emotion in general and combined with the willingness to help the child deal with emotions, is associated with relatively high levels of children's regulation of arousal and social competence. Perhaps it is balance and emotional insight in parental emotion-related views and behaviors that are most predictive of positive outcomes for children. It may be important that parents encourage children to express emotions with them so that parents have an opportunity to help their children deal with their feelings ancl with the situations that elicit negative emotions.

Consistent with the view that there is a configuration of optimal, sensitive parenting responses and with the research on maternal sensitivity, parental reactions that are appropriate to the situation and do not produce emotional overarousal in the child seem to be associated with positive outcomes for children. Denhamn (1993) found that 2-year-olds whose mothers reacted with optimal responsiveness when confronted with children's anger (i.e., responded with calm neutrality) were less likely to become angry, were more capable of responding positively to other people when their mother was absent, and expressed more interest in their environment than did children of other mothers. In addition, children whose mothers responded optimally to children's fear (i.e., displayed calm, neutral caretaking vs. tension or waited a moment to allow the child to manage his or her fear vs. immediate tenderness) were less fearful in other situations. Optimal maternal responding to sadness (tender, not neutral, maternal responding) and fear also were related to low levels of expressed anger when the mother was absent. Furthermore, maternal optimal reactions to anger have been correlated with children's prosocial behavior with peers, whereas optimal reactions to sadness have been linked to overall emotional expressivity (Denham &k Grout, 1993).

Through their reactions to children's emotions, socializers may teach children specific ways of dealing with emotions. This teaching may be intentional or it may be incidental to other parental goals. As just discussed, some parents encourage children to hide or control their emotions; others suggest or encourage techniques such as seeking social support or dealing instrumentally with problems and stressors (e.g., Hardy, Power, & Jaedicke, 1993; Kliewer et al., 1996; Roberts & Strayer, 1987).

Initial findings are consistent with the view that parental emphasis on children finding ways to deal instrumentally with situations eliciting negative emotion is linked to positive social functioning, at least to some degree. Parental (primarily maternal) emphasis on children's instrumental problem solving has been positively related to sons' (but not daughters') sympathy (Eisenberg, Fabes, Schaller, Carlo, & Miller, 1991) and comforting behavior (Eisenberg, Fabes, & Murphy, 1996), and to constructive coping, social skills, and popularity (the latter particularly for girls; Eisenberg, Fabes, & Murphy, 1996). It is assumed that these relations hold, in part, because instrumental coping is used to manage negative emotional arousal and generally is viewed as an acceptable way to handle emotion-eliciting situations. Furthermore, Roberts and Strayer (1987) found that parental modeling of instrumental problem-solving responses when their children were upset (e.g., putting a bandage on the child when he or she was hurt) was positively related to children' s social competence. In fact, across several samples, fathers' practical, problem-solving responses to pre-schoolers' distress were positively associated with children's friendliness, cooperation, purposiveness (vs. aimlessness), and achievement orientation (Roberts, 1994). It is of interest that fathers reported engaging in practical problem-solving responses more often when their sons, rather than their daughters, were upset. Children may model their parents' instrumental responses in stressful contexts; in fact, Kliewer et al. (1996) found that boys', although not girls', active coping (thinking through problems and taking action) was positively related to their fathers' reported use of active coping.

The pattern of association between parental emphasis on instrumental coping and positive social or emotional outcomes is not, however, highly consistent. Parental emphasis on instrumental coping was associated with low levels of young children's nonconstructive coping with anger in one study (Eisenberg, Fabes, Carlo, & Karbon, 1992), but not in another (Eisenberg & Fabes, 1994). Moreover, problem-focused parental reactions generally were not associated with adults' reports of children's externalizing types of behavior in elementary school (Eisenberg, Fabes et al., 1997), and paternal problem-focused reactions were linked to lower adult-reported social skills (i.e., socially appropriate behavior) for girls in one study of elementary schoolchildren (Eisenberg, Fabes, & Murphy, 1996).

Thus, there is some evidence that parental emphasis on instrumental coping is associated with positive aspects of social competence and constructive coping with stress, but not with measures of externalizing problem behaviors. Problem-focused reactions may be particularly useful for promoting prosocial behavior, cooperation, and sympathy in boys; instrumental responses may be deemed an appropriate way for males to assist others (Eagly & Crowley, 1986). Boys who are adept in problem-focused coping may be less likely than other boys to become emotionally overaroused (to experience personal distress) when exposed to others' negative emotions. Problem-focused reactions may be less pertinent to the enactment of externalizing problem behaviors, and fathers may emphasize instrumental problem solving primarily for girls who are in need of social skills. Moreover, parental emphasis on instrumental coping may not always affect the degree to which children use instrumental coping. Kliewer et al. (1996) found little relation between mothers' reports of coping suggestions to their children and sons' self-reported coping (also see Kliewer & Lewis, 1995). Daughters were low in active coping only if mothers were both low in active coaching suggestions and used less active coping themselves.

There are few data on fathers' reactions to children's negative emotions. In one of the few available studies (Eisenberg, Fabes, & Murphy, 1996), with the exception of problem-focused reactions, paternal reactions tended to be unrelated to quality of children's socioemotional functioning. However, in one study of 4- to 5-year-olds, fathers who reacted to their children's displays of negative emotion during physical play with negative emotion had children who shared less, were more aggressive, and avoided others at pre-school. Similar findings were not obtained for mothers, suggesting that fathers' negative responses to children's negative emotion may have important effects (Carson & Parke, 1996). Obviously, there are insufficient data on paternal reactions to draw any firm conclusions. However, it is interesting to note that fathers report more punitive responses and less supportive reactions than do mothers (Eisenberg, Fabes, & Murphy, 1996), a finding that is consistent with children's reports of expected parental reactions (Zeman & Shipman, 1996). Because of this difference between maternal and paternal reactions to negative emotions, it is hazardous to assume that the same pattern of findings will be obtained for paternal and maternal reactions to children's negative emotions.

The role of the sex of child in parental reactions. It is likely that the sex of a child has an effect on parents' reactions to children's emotions, albeit perhaps less than one might expect. Interestingly, parents often do not report reacting differently to the negative emotions of boys or girls (Eisenberg & Fabes, 1994; Eisenberg, Fabes, & Murphy, 1996; Eisenberg et al., in press). However, in one study, both mothers and fathers of preschoolers reported putting more pressure on boys to control "unnecessary" crying, and fathers reported being more likely to use problem-solving responses when their sons were upset (Roberts, 1994). Similarly, Block (19R80) found that mothers and fathers reported that they encouraged their sons, more than their daughters, to control their emotions. Also, parents are more likely to instruct older boys than girls not to show fear (Casey & Fuller, 1994).

Parents tend not to report that they have suggested different coping strategies to daughters and sons (Kliewer et al., 1996), although, in one study, mothers reported that they encouraged boys more than girls to use distraction (e.g., physical release of emotions and distracting actions) as a coping strategy, and discouraged negative actions when coping more for boys. However, in this study, mothers did not differentially suggest or encourage other types of coping such as active coping, positive cognitive restructuring, avoidance, or seeking support for emotion or instrumental help (Miller, Kliewer, Hepworth, & Sandler, 1994).

Regardless of what parents report, there is some evidence that parents have different expectations in regard to sons' and daughters' emotional expressivity and actually may reinforce the expression of emotions differently in boys and girls (Birnbaum & Croll, 1984). For example, mothers' behaviors during dyadic social interactions vary for infant girls and boys. Mothers seem to be more contingent in response to their sons' than daughters' emotional expressions during play. Specifically, mothers match their sons' expressions more than their daughters' expressions (Malatesta & Haviland, 1982; Tronick & Cohn, 1989) and respond more contingently to their sons' than daughters' smiles (Malatesta & Haviland, 1982). Assuming that mothers desire to maintain their infants' positive arousal, it is possible that mothers perceive their boys to be more at risk for negativity and thus are trying to counteract this trend by encouraging more positivity with their sons.Moreover, girls and boys expect different reactions from parents for their emotional displays. Dino, Barnett, and Howard (1984) elicited 8- to 12-year-olds' expectations regarding parental responses to the child experiencing an interpersonal dilemma. Children expected fathers to respond to sons instrumentally (e.g., by suggesting behaviors the child could perform to resolve the problem) and mothers to respond to daughters expressively (e.g., by focusing on feelings). These coping styles could be reflected in children's handling of emotion in interpersonal interactions. In addition, in a study of elementary school children, Fuchs and Thelen (1988) found that boys expected their parents to disapprove of their expression of sadness more than did girls. Boys also expect less adult disapproval if they express anger than do girls (Perry, Perry, & Weiss, 1989).

Consistent with children's reports regarding anger (Perry et al., 1989), Birnbaum and Croll (1984) found that parents reported greater acceptance of anger and more intense anger in boys than in girls. Moreover, in an observational study, mothers responded in reinforcing ways (with attentive concern) to their 2- to 3½-year-old sons' expression of anger, but tended to ignore or tried to inhibit their daughters' expressions of anger (Radke-Yarrow & Kochanska, 1990). In addition, there is evidence that mothers infrequently speak about anger with daughters (Dunn, Brown, & Beardsall, 1991). However, Casey and Fuller (1994) found that mothers reported they would regulate anger more for boys than girls at ages 3 and 7 and less for boys at ages 5 and 9. Findings may vary with the context and target of anger; for example, fathers (but not mothers) reported that they are more likely to restrict sons' than daughters' expression of anger toward them (Block, 19R80). Thus, in general, parents (especially mothers) seem to react less negatively to boys' than girls' expression of anger, although parental reactions may vary depending on who is the target of the anger and the age of the child.

In summary, although parents sometimes do not report reacting differently to girls' and boys' emotions, there appear to be some differences in parents' reactions to sons and daughters. It is likely that this differential pattern of responding has an effect on children's expression and regulation of emotion. Moreover, due to differences in parents' (and others') perceptions regarding what is acceptable emotional behavior for girls and boys, parental ERSBs may not have the same consequences or function in the same way for girls and boys. Unfortunately, at this time, little is known about sex as a moderator of the processes involved in the socialization of emotion.

Discussion of Emotion

Socializers discuss emotions in a variety of contexts, including as part of their reaction to children's emotions. Recent findings are consistent with the commonsense notion that socializers' communications about emotion and its regulation contribute to children's socioemotional development. Emotion-related discussion in the family may not only communicate support, but also sharpen the child's awareness of emotional states and promote the development of an emotion-related conceptual system (Malatesta & Haviland, 1985). As part of everyday conversations, parents can emphasize certain emotions over others, explain the causes and consequences of emotions, and help children understand the experience and regulation of emotion. Thus, young children who grow up with adults who encourage conversations about emotional experiences may be better able to communicate their own emotions and may have a better understanding of others' emotions. As a consequence, they may be relatively high in emotional and social competence. In contrast, children reared in families in which emotions, particularly negative emotions, are not discussed freely may be deprived of information about emotions and their regulation and may conclude that emotions should not be expressed. These children would be expected to be at a disadvantage in terms of their emotional and social competence.

The relation of parental discussion of emotion to children's understanding of emotion and quality of their social functioning. Mothers use affective language even with very young infants (Malatesta & Haviland, 1982) and continue to talk about emotions in their conversations with their toddlers (Beeghly, Bretherton, & Mervis, 1986; Capatides & Bloom, 1993; Dunn, Bretherton, & Munn, 1987). However, in industrialized North American majority culture, mothers rarely label their children's emotions (Beeghly et al., 1986; Capatides & Bloom, 1993).

Individual differences in mothers' discussion of feelings have been associated with toddlers' or pre-schoolers' own speech about emotions (Denham & Auerbach, 1995; Dunn et al., 1987). For example, Dunn et al. (1987) found that toddlers' use of feeling-state language at 24 months of age was positively related to mothers' and older siblings' use of emotion language 6 months earlier. This pattern of findings is consistent with the hypothesis that familial discussion of emotions has a causal influence on children's understanding of emotion.

Maternal conversations about emotion appear to be linked not only to children's use of emotion language, but also to their awareness and understanding of emotion (Denham, Cook, & Zoller, 1992; Denham, Zoller, & Couchoud, 1994; Dunn, Brown, & Beardsall, 1991; Dunn, Brown, Slomkowski, Tesla, & Youngblade, 1991). For example, Dunn, Brown, et al. (1991) found that family discourse about feeling states when children were 33 months old was related to children's scores on a measure of affective perspective taking at 40 months of age. Conversations about causal relations, but not talk about feelings, at 33 months predicted children's understanding of conflicting emotions at age 6 (Brown & Dunn, 1996). In another study, 3-year-olds who grew up in homes in which feelings were frequently discussed were better than peers at making judgments about others' emotions at age 6 (Dunn, Brown, & Beardsall, 1991).

These findings are relevant to the development of emotion regulation because young children who feel free to discuss their emotions and who are sophisticated in their understanding of emotion may be relatively skilled at controlling their own negative arousal during distressing situations. Kopp (1992) found that toddlers who had the ability to talk about self-related needs were less likely to become distressed during a clean-up task than were toddlers with less sophisticated language abilities. Kopp argued that toddlers who can communicate their feelings

through words, negotiate, verbally refuse to follow instructions, or change the topic of discussion become less distressed during potentially frustrating situations.

Gottman et al. (1997) examined parental awareness of emotion and coaching of the child' s emotion as predictors of a variety of child outcomes. Their variables of parental coaching included the notion of talking with and educating the child about emotions:

Although the variable of coaching obviously includes more than the discussion of emotion, sensitive discussion of emotion and emotion-relevant topics is central to the construct. Gottman et al. (1997) argued that parental supportive coaching of children in regard to their emotions is "nested within a web of warm parenting" (p. 90) and does not particularly promote the child's expressiveness. Rather, parental coaching fosters children's ability to inhibit negative affect, to self-soothe, to focus attention (including social attention), and to regulate their own emotions. These skills are expected to promote socially skilled behavior rather than unregulated problem behavior. In contrast, children whose parents dismiss emotions and do not talk about them in a supportive way were expected to be relatively low in the ability to manage their own emotions and in their attention in social situations. This was expected to be especially true if parents criticize, belittle, or mock the child. Thus, in Gottman et al.'s model, both the tendency to discuss emotion with the child and the quality of the communication are critical.

Gottman et al. (1996, Gottman et al. 1997) generally obtained support for their views. They found that parents who were high on coaching had children who were physiologically well regulated, which in turn predicted children's ability to manage their emotional arousal in social contexts. Children's regulation predicted their social behavior (e.g., aggression and negative interactions during play with a friend) with peers. The effects of coaching on later peer competence were also partially mediated by low parental derogation of the child. Thus, parental supportive coaching of children in regard to emotions was linked to quality of interactions with peers through both children's regulation and through the quality of parenting interactions.

Other data are consistent with a link between parental discussion of emotion and emotion-related social and emotional outcomes for children. Denham (1997) found that preschoolers who reported that their parents discussed their emotional reactions (in enactments) were rated by teachers as cooperative, empathic, and prosocial. In a study of elementary schoolchildren, mothers who discussed their own sympathy and sadness when watching an empathy-inducing film with their child had sons who themselves reported more sympathy than did sons of mothers who discussed emotion to a lesser degree. However, there was no relation for daughters, and maternal self-report of emotion was not related to children's facial reactions to the film. In the same study, mothers who verbally linked the events in the film to children's own experiences had children who exhibited more emotional responsivity to the film (sadness or distress for girls; concern or distress for boys) and sons who reported more sympathy or sadness than did other children (Eisenberg, Fabes, Carlo, Troyer, et al., 1992). In another study, mothers' explanations for their own sadness were associated with preschoolers' observed prosocial behavior, as well as the children's observed emotional expressivity (Denham & Grout, 1992). Finally, mothers' self-reported conversations about emotions also have been related to preschoolers' high social status with peers (Laird, Pettit, Mize, Brown, & Lindsey, 1994).

The degree to which discussion of emotion is related to aspects of positive social functioning is likely to be moderated by the quality of the parent-child relationship or interaction and the content of parental discussions. Some mothers may limit their conversations with their young children to discussions of positive emotions, whereas others may promote discussions about negative emotions or even use language to try to elicit negative emotion from children (Miller & Sperry, 1987). In one study, it was found that mothers' talk about emotions varied by infants' attachment classification (Goldberg, Mackay-Soroka, & Rochester, 1994). Infants classified

as securely attached had mothers who referred to both positive and negative emotions in their conversations; in contrast, infants who were classified as insecure-avoidant had mothers who were unlikely to comment about emotions, particularly negative emotions. Mothers of insecure-resistant infants also made few comments about emotions, and these comments were limited primarily to talk about negative emotions (Goldberg et al., 1994). Therefore, consistent with Cassidy's (1994) hypothesis discussed earlier, secure infants may feel free to express a range of emotions, whereas insecure infants may feel the need to minimize or maximize their emotional expressivity based on the messages they receive about emotions.

It is likely that the relation between parental emotion-related discussion and children's social competence is moderated by the purpose of that discussion in the parent-child interaction. As discussed previously, there is some evidence suggesting that parents sometimes try to guide and socialize children's emotional reactions more for children who are low than high in social competence (e.g., Eisenberg, Fabes, & Murphy, 1996, for fathers only). Denham et al. (1997) found that parents' use of guiding and socializing language when discussing emotions with their preschoolers (e.g., "You really made me sad that time. I wish you wouldn't scream like that" or "Big kids don't cry so much") was related to low levels of children' s positive reactions to peers' emotions and teacher-rated social competence, as well as children's internalizing emotion (e.g., sadness, fear, tension) in the classroom. Frequency of discussion of emotion and parental attempts to explain or clarify the causes or consequences of feeling states generally were not related to children's so--cial functioning. Similarly, Denham and Auerbach (1995) found that mothers' use of socializing language was positively associated with children' s emotional reactivity to others' emotions, fearfulness, and low levels of emotional language. Thus, a critical distinction may be whether parents use emotion language simply to clarify and teach their children about emotions or to try to modify children's inappropriate behavior. If parents are trying to remediate children' s socioemotional deficits, there will be a negative association between parental use of socializing emotion language and children's socioemotional functioning. The challenge, of course, is to reliably discern the function of parental communications about emotion.

The appropriateness and the quality of the parent's communication also would be expected to influence its impact on the child. Grusec and Goodnow (1994), in a discussion of parental discipline, noted several aspects of parental reactions likely to moderate their effects. These included the parent's characteristic disciplinary style; clarity, consistency, directness, and relevance of the message; cues related to significance of the message (e.g., parental affect); decoding required by the child; and whether the discussion captures the child's attention. These same variables are likely to influence when and whether parental discussions of emotion-relevant topics with children elicit the child's attention, are processed appropriately, gain acceptance by the child, and have an effect on children's current and future socioemotional functioning.

There are some data consistent with the view that the effects of parental discussion of emotion vary as a function of the age appropriateness of the content of the discussion with the child. In a study of young elementary schoolchildren, Fabes et al. (1994) found that the use of emotion words while mothers told a story about a person in distress or need was not related to children' s empathy-related responding or prosocial behavior. However, Fabes et al. also assessed a variable labeled *responsiveness*, which was a composite of maternal warmth and mothers' tendencies to direct their child's attention to the story by means of pointing, telling the child to "look at this picture," or eliciting involvement or role taking with statements such as "this is just like what happened to you." Mothers high in responsiveness had second-grade children who were high in facial sympathy in reaction to an empathy-inducing film, low in facial and physiological markers of self-focused personal distress, and relatively helpful toward needy others. Thus, the combination of warmth and other-oriented communications was associated

with prosocial and sympathetic responding for second graders. However, maternal responsiveness was unrelated to the same variables for kindergarten children. It appeared that maternal attempts to manage children's negative emotion predicted sympathy and helpfulness for younger children (Fabes et al., 1994; see also Child Effects section later in this article). Thus, drawing children's attention to details of a sad or fear-inducing story may have been useful for older children, but not for some young children who are likely to become emotionally over-aroused. Although there are other possible explanations for the pattern of data in this study, the results are consistent with the assertion that different parental ERSBs may function differently depending on children's age.

The role of sex of child in parental discussion of emotion. Mothers discuss emotions differently with sons and daughters, which could contribute to sex differences in the understanding of emotion, in the expression of emotion, and perhaps even in emotion regulation and social competence. Dunn et al. (1987) found that both mothers and older siblings mentioned feeling states more frequently to 18-month-old girls than boys, and by 24 months of age, girls referred to feeling states more often than did boys (Dunn et al., 1987). Similar findings were obtained in another longitudinal study of children observed from 40 to 70 months of age (Kuebli, Butler, & Fivush, 1995; see also Kuebli & Fivush, 1992). In addition, fathers may be particularly likely to discuss emotion with daughters (Greif, Alvarez, & Ulman, 1981).

Moreover, Fivush (1989) found that mothers focus more on positive than negative emotions with daughters. Mothers apparently discuss certain negative emotions, particularly anger and disgust, more with sons than daughters, although they discuss sadness considerably more with daughters (Dunn et al., 1987; Fivush, 1989,Fivush, 1991; Kuebli et al., 1995; Kuebli & Fivush, 1992; see Brody, 1993). Thus, daughters may learn that they are not supposed to express anger but may be more attuned to emotions such as sadness. Moreover, mothers emphasized the emotional state itself in discussions with daughters, whereas with sons they often discussed the causes and consequences of emotions. Such differences could be associated with the fact that girls (Kuebli et al., 1995) and women (Wheeler & Nezleck, 1977) talk more about emotions than do boys and men. The ability to talk about and deal with emotional issues can be viewed as a social skill that enhances the quality of social functioning in some social situations.

Parental discussions of emotions with girls and boys seem to differ in yet other ways. Kuebli and Fivush (1992) found that more of parents' attributions of emotions to the child were positive for sons than for daughters, whereas more attributions of emotion to others were positive for daughters (also see Dunn et al., 1987). Moreover, mothers have been found to be warmer and more involving when telling stories about negative events to daughters than sons (Fabes et al., 1994), which could elicit more empathic involvement in others' negative emotions. Perhaps mothers try to emotionally involve daughters more than sons in discussions of others' emotions. Consistent with stereotypes, mothers may believe that girls are supposed to be more empathic and emotionally involved with others.

Brody (1993) argued that gender differences in the socialization of emotional expressiveness may be attributable in part to girls' earlier and superior language development. Because of girls' early use of language, combined, perhaps, with greater parental discussion of language with daughters, girls may learn to curb aggressive behavioral models of emotional expression more readily than do boys and may be more likely to use facial and verbal expressions of emotion. Although Brody's argument is logical, at this time it is unclear whether developmental differences in girls and boys, in sex-typed parental beliefs, or in other factors underlie differences in parents' discussions of emotions with boys and girls. Moreover, although initial findings suggest a relation between how parents discuss emotion with sons versus daughters and children's social and emotional competence, there are few data as yet pertaining to the long-term effects of such parental sex-differentiated discussions of emotion.

Parental Expressivity and Children's Expressivity and Socioemotional Competence

Parents' expression of emotion may be linked to children's social and emotional competence in multiple ways. First, it may affect children's emotional expression directly, through processes such as imitation and contagion. Second, parental expression of emotion may be a mediator or correlate of other aspects of parenting that affect children's emotional and social competence. For example, responsive mothers may tend to express positive emotion frequently, which in turn affects children's expressivity; or parents who value the expression of emotion (and therefore are expressive) may reinforce their children's expressivity due to their philosophy about emotions. In turn, children's emotional expression may have implications for the quality of their social behavior (i.e., children's expressivity may mediate the relation between parental expressivity and child social competence). Consistent with a mediational hypothesis, the degree of children's expression of positive and negative emotions has been found to predict how children are perceived and whether they are liked by peers. For example, preschool children who express positive emotion are liked by peers (Sroufe, Schork, Motti, Lawroski, & LaFreniere, 1984; see Hubbard & Coie, 1994; Parke et al., 1989).

Third, parental expressiveness may influence children's abilities to interpret and understand others' emotional reactions. Parents' expression of emotion provides informnation about the emotional significance of events, behaviors that accompany various emotions, and others' reactions to emotion. Parental expression of emotion also serves to expose children to a range of emotions. Accuracy of interpreting others' emotions is thought to be related to how well children interact with others (Dodge, 1985; Eisenberg & Fabes, 1998), so the effects of parental expression of emotion on children's understanding of emotion have been hypothesized to influence social competence (e.g., Cassidy, Parke, Butkovsky, & Braungart, 1992).

Fourth, parental expression of emotion (e.g., hostility or anger) may influence children's socioemotional competence relatively directly through mechanisms such as shaping children's feelings about themselves, others, and the social world (Eisenberg, 1998). This literature is embedded mostly in work on several topics: (a) global parental warmth or sensitivity versus detachment or hostility (or parent affective style) and its associations with an array of outcomes for children (Cook, Kenny, & Goldstein, 1991; Matthews, Woodall, Kenyon, & Jacob, 1996; see Maccoby & Martin, 1983), (b) the effects of direct expressions of negative affect in parent-child interactions on children's emotion and behavior (e.g., Cook et al., 1991), (c) attachment and the development of children' s working models of relationships (Bell, 1998; Bretherton, 1990), and (d) the effects of exposure to conflict among adults on children (see Cummings & Cummings, 1988; Davies & Cummings, 1994; Gottman & Katz, 1989). Work on the overall quality of the parent-child relationship, as well as on conflict in the home, is not reviewed in detail in this article. However, it should be noted that familial expressivity has been positively correlated with perceived social support from one's family, as well as with adult attachment strategies (Bell, 1998).

Recently, Dunsmore and Halberstadt (1997) argued that because emotions influence the development of schemas about emotional expression and experience, familial expressiveness must be particularly influential in children's construction of self- and world schema. Specifically, they suggested that familial patterns of emotional expressiveness (both of positive and negative emotions, and for discrete emotions) lead children to develop expectations for normative emotional experiences and expressions. When other people express emotions in a manner that is more salient than usual (e.g., more intense, of longer duration), the event becomes particularly relevant for children's self- and world-schema formation. Moreover, they argued that family attributions and beliefs about emotional experiences and the expression of emotion affect children's evaluations of their own emotional experience. Specifically, it is the

match among children's characteristics, family expressive style, and family attributions about emotions and cultural prototypes of emotional experience and expression that affects the development of children's schemas and the evaluation of their own and others' emotional experiences and expression. The combination of these factors

Whether children come to view their emotions as threatening, something to be controlled, and something to enjoy and that can enhance relationships, or as a deterrent to rational thinking emerges from the way their families and the surrounding culture deal with emotion, and children's fit on this dimension within their family and culture. Dunsmore and Halberstadt acknowledged that there has been little direct empirical testing of their model, but argued that the literature on the relations of familial expressivity to a variety of social behaviors is generally supportive of their perspective. Moreover, in one study, Dunsmore, Costanzo, and Fredrickson (1995) found that children were more self-schematic about prosocial behavior (i.e., perceived prosocial behavior as a salient feature of the self) when they perceived that their mothers expressed relatively low baseline levels of positive emotion but expressed relatively high levels of happiness in response to children's nice behavior. Other findings in the same study provided some support for the notion that maternal emotional reactions to children's competence-related behavior bore some relation to children being self-schematic about competence.

Of course, genetic factors also could contribute to similarities between parental expressivity and child expressivity. Furthermore, factors external to the parent-child relationship, such as economic hardship, could produce similar emotional characteristics in parents and children.

Parental expression of emotion and infants' behavior in a given context. As noted previously, one way that parental expression of emotion may affect children's social behavior is that it provides information to the young child about how to interpret events, people, or objects in the child's world. In fact, caregivers' affective signals have been found to alter infants' behaviors during uncertain events. In work on the phenomenon labeled *social referencing*, infants appear to use cues from their caregivers to evaluate ambiguous situations. For example, researchers have found that 1-year-old infants avoided crossing an apparent drop-off (ledge; Campos, Barrett, Lamb, Goldsmith, & Stenberg, 1983; Sorce, Emde, Campos, & Klinnert, 1985) and were less likely to approach ambiguous toys (Klinnert, 1984) when their mothers displayed negative affect toward the event. Infants also cried more when picked up by a stranger while their mother displayed a worried expression toward that person. On the other hand, when mothers displayed positive emotional expressions, infants were willing to cross the apparent drop-off (Campos et al., 1983; Sorce et al., 1985), were more likely to approach an unusual toy (Gunnar & Stone, 1984; Klinnert, 1984), and displayed relatively little inhibited behavior and more positive affect with a stranger (than in the worried condition; Boccia & Campos, 1989). A recent investigation indicated that mothers' negative vocal tone (as opposed to facial signals of emotion) provided sufficient information to impact their infants' behavior (Mumme, Fernald, & Herrera, 1996). These data provide strong support for the notion that infants use others' emotional cues to interpret the meaning of situations and people and to guide their behavior toward novel people and objects. Thus, parental emotional reactions to people may, over time, influence the degree to which children experience positive versus negative affect and display inhibited behavior with unfamiliar people, and perhaps people more generally.

The link between parental and child expressivity. Regardless of the reason or underlying process, there is an association between the degree to which parents exhibit emotion and children's expression and reports of their own emotions. Such a relation is found even with infants (Haviland & Lelwica, 1987; Termine & Izard, 1988). For instance, in one study, 9-month-old infants expressed more joy if their mothers expressed joy and displayed more sadness, anger, and gaze aversion (away from their mother) if their mothers expressed sadness

(Termine & Izard, 1988). Thus, it is possible that mothers' emotional expressions actually induce emotional responses in their infants (Termine & Izard, 1988; Thompson, 1990).

General expressivity of parents in the home, rather than in a single situation involving the child also has been related to older children's and adults' expressivity. For example, Balswick and Avertt (1977) and Halberstadt (1986) found that college students who rated their families of origin as expressive tended to be more expressive than were students who rated their families as less expressive. Denham (1989) found that mothers who displayed positive emotions had toddlers who tended to display positive rather than negative emotion (also see Denham & Grout, 1992). Similar findings have been obtained with 4- to 5-year-olds using observations of children's positive versus negative expressivity with peers and mothers' and fathers' reports of their own expressivity (Gamer, Robertson, & Smith, 1997). In addition, in a study of school-age children, parents' positive expressivity was positively correlated with children's observed affective balance (amount of positive vs. negative emotion) at school (Jones & Eisenberg, 1997).

In a review of the empirical literature, Halberstadt et al. (in press) examined the relation of family expressiveness (FE) to children's spontaneous expressivity. FE was measured in diverse ways, including in specific contexts and as reported by parents. In 18 of 20 studies, positive FE (the expression of positive emotion in the family) was associated with individuals' positive self-expressiveness in childhood and adulthood. Some of the exceptions to the general pattern were in situations in which children's positive emotionality was assessed in a very specific context (e.g., in a disappointing situation) rather than more generally (Gamer & Power, 1996).

Findings in regard to FE and offsprings' expression of negative emotion are more complex and may vary as a function of the type of negative emotion expressed by parents or children, intensity of the emotion, and whether the parental emotion is directed specifically toward the child. Across four studies, Halberstadt et al. (in press) found no consistent relation between familial or parental negative emotionality and infants' or toddlers' expressivity. However, in 6 of 10 studies with preschool through elementary school-age children and in three of four studies with adults, negative FE was positively related to children's expression of negative emotion. Negative FEwas inconsistently related to the expression of positive emotion across nine studies.

Given the aversive nature of hostile emotions, it is not surprising that hostile, dominant familial or parental emotion tends to be linked with children's expression of negative emotion. For example, Denham (1989) found that mothers who exhibited relatively high amounts of anger in interactions with their children had toddlers who tended to display negative expressions and relatively low levels of positive emotion. Similar findings have been obtained with preschoolers using maternal reports of their externalizing negative emotions or observed maternal negative emotion (Denham & Grout, 1992,Denham & Grout, 1993; Denham et al., 1997). Moreover, reported parental anger directed toward sons in disciplinary contexts has been related to low levels of positive emotional expressiveness during pre-schoolers' interactions with peers (Gamer et al., 1997). Similarly, adults' anger, or family members' reports of these adults' anger, have been associated with reports of negative expressiveness (including hostile, dominant emotions and softer, submissive emotions) in the family of origin (Burrowes & Halberstadt, 1987). Mothers' reports of dominant negative emotion also have been negatively related to positive emotional expressions in a situation in which the display of positive emotion was a marker of appropriate emotion regulation (i.e., in a situation in which children were given a disappointing gift; Gamer & Power, 1996).

In contrast, low-intensity expressions of anger may not be associated with high levels of children's expression of negative emotion. For example, frequent but low-level maternal anger and anger caused by factors other than disobedience have been positively related to young children' s emotional balance at school (positive vs. negative emotion; Denham & Grout, 1992; also see Denham, 1989). Parents' anger is a form of communication regarding their reactions to children's behavior, and mild expressions of anger may be an important means of communicating information to children without inducing high levels of reactance, negativity, or anxiety and arousal.

Findings have been more mixed for parental expression of nonhostile negative emotions; they generally, but not always, have been linked to offsprings' negative expressivity or low levels of positive emotion. For example, Denham et al. (1997) found that parents who were low in displays of internalizing emotions (e.g., fear, sadness, tension) had children who were affectively balanced in the preschool classroom. Familial expression of softer, nonhostile negative emotions also has been associated with daughters' vicarious emotional responding to others in distress (e.g., sympathy; Eisenberg, Fabes, Carlo, Troyer, et al., 1992; Eisenberg, Fabes, Schaller, Miller, et al., 1991), albeit not always (Gamer et al., 1994).

Of course, it is likely that the effects of parental nonhostile negative emotion on children vary depending on the frequency and intensity of parental negative emotion. Thus, the effects for parental depression may be different than those for normally occurring parental expressions of sadness and anxiety. Depressed mothers are less responsive, display less positive affect, and gaze at their infants less than do nondepressed mothers (Field et al., 1988; Pickens & Field, 1993). Infants of depressed mothers, in comparison to infants of nondepressed mothers, have been found to display more negative affect and self-oriented regulation behaviors during face-to-face interactions (Field, 1984; Field et al., 1988; Pickens & Field, 1993), as well as low levels of positive affect during interactions with mother and strangers (Field et al., 1988). Moreover, there is some evidence that depressed mothers and their infants share negative affective states more often and positive states less often than do nondepressed mothers and their infants (Field, Healy, & LeBlanc, 1989). The aforementioned finding for self-oriented regulation may indicate that infants with depressed mothers learn to rely on themselves rather than others for regulation, even at a very early age. Nonetheless, the negative emotion expressed by depressed parents would be expected, over time, to affect children's arousal and increase the risk of children's dysregulated emotion and behavior (Cummings & Davies, 1994). Of course, genetic factors may partially account for the patterns of findings with depressed mothers and their infants.

The aforementioned findings suggest that it is important to differentiate between positive and negative parental expressivity, and perhaps between the expression of hostile and nonhostile negative emotions. When parental reports of their own expression of positive and negative emotion have not been differentiated, the results may be discrepant with the larger body of findings. For example, Halberstadt, Fox, and Jones (1993) found that 6-year-old children of low expressive mothers tended to express more positive and less negative emotion than did children of high expressive mothers. This result may have occurred because high negative expressiveness, regardless of high positive expressiveness, tends to be linked to children's expression of negative emotion. Moreover, the nature of the measure of expressiveness likely is crucial. Children's negative expressivity of their own directly experienced emotions probably has a different significance than negative expressiveness in situations involving empathy for others' negative emotions.

A major problem in this literature is that it often is not known if parental expression of emotion is directed at the child or not, or even if the index of FE reflects primarily parents' emotional expressions (rather than those of other family members). When negative emotion is not directed

at the child, especially if the emotion is not hostile and arousing (or the result of ongoing parental depression), children may learn that it is acceptable and nonthreatening to express some negative emotions. They may not experience more negative emotion than other children, but may feel freer to express such emotion when it occurs. In contrast, in family interactions involving hostile emotions, especially if they are directed at the child or are embedded in ongoing marital conflict, the child is likely to develop a hostile view of the world or feel emotionally insecure (Davies & Cummings, 1994). In such situations, children may actually experience more negative emotion than their peers, and their frequent experience of negative emotion may account for their high levels of negative expressivity.

Unfortunately, it is difficult to differentiate between measures of the expression versus experience of emotion; people may express feelings they do not feel and hide actual emotions. Halberstadt et al. (in press) tried to differentiate between expressivity and the experience of emotion in their review of the literature and found that, for adults, positive FE was associated with the experience of positive emotion in two studies, as well as with empathic responding (Eisenberg, Fabes, Schaller, Miller, et al., 1991) and low levels of proneness to depression (Cooley, 1992). In contrast, negative FE was associated with increased emotionality (usually negative emotionality) in five studies with adults. The specific type of negative emotion expressed may affect the pattern of findings. For example, submissive (softer) FE has been positively associated with women's empathic sympathy, sadness, and personal distress (Eisenberg, Fabes, Schaller, Miller, et al., 1991), as well as dependent depression (Bell, Satsky, & Garrison, 1996, cited in Halberstadt et al., in press). However, dominant (hostile) FE has been unrelated to reports of empathy (Eisenberg, Fabes, Carlo, Troyer, et al., 1992; Eisenberg, Fabes, Schaller, Miller, et al., 1991), and has also been associated with proneness to depression (Cooley, 1992), particularly self-critical depression (Bell et al., 1996; see Halberstadt et al., in press).

In contrast to the findings for adults, Halberstadt et al. (in press) found no consistent relation between FE and experienced emotionality for children across eight studies. However, the lack of consistency is not surprising given the following: (a) in a number of the studies, dominant and submissive FE were combined (e.g., Cassidy et al., 1992); (b) in some studies, the measure of FE was derived from a very specific situation (e.g., when mothers were telling stories about negative events to their children and may have been trying to regulate the degree of their children's negative reactions; Fabes et al., 1994); and (c) the outcome measures of emotionality differed greatly in their significance (e.g., sadness at school, empathic reactions to a film, emotional lability in a situation involving toddlers, or child expressivity when playing a game with a parent). Thus, the relevant studies differed greatly in their operationalizations of both FE and emotionality.

It is likely that there are relations between negative FE and children's experience of negative emotions if the measures of each construct reflect characteristic negative emotional expressivity and/or felt emotion rather than emotionality in specific contexts. In two studies, negative emotion was assessed in children's naturally occurring interactions at school. Jones and Eisenberg (1997) found parent-reported dominant negative FE was positively related to girls' naturally occurring anger expressed at lunch or on the playground at school. The other negative emotion, sadness, was observed infrequently at school. Denham and Grout (1992) apparently obtained no significant findings for preschoolers' anger, but found complex relations between children's observed sadness and mothers' reports in emotion diaries. Specifically, preschool children were sadder if their mothers reported showing less intense sadness over daily problems and when mothers cried to express sadness. Moreover, children whose mothers reported anger over disobedience showed more sadness at preschool, especially if their mothers' anger was frequent. In addition, children exhibited more sadness if mothers reported that they experienced more intense tension or if mothers provided mixed messages

about tension (apologies when tension was considered helpful or no apology when tension was considered harmful). These findings suggest that there is a relation between negative FE and children' s experience of negative emotion, but that the relation is not simple. Until there are sufficient studies to examine the effects of moderating variables (e.g., age and sex of the child and operationalizations of FE and of expressivity), it is unlikely that a consistent pattern of findings will be obtained in studies of negative FE.

The relation of family expressiveness to children's understanding of emotions and quality of social functioning. Family emotional expressiveness generally has been positively associated with children's socioemotional competencies, although findings in regard to the expression of negative emotions are more complex than those for positive FE. General parental expressiveness (regardless of valence), as reported by parents or in parent-child interactions, has been positively related to children's social status (Bronstein, Fitzgerald, Briones, Pieniadz, & D'Ari, 1993; Cassidy et al., 1992) and, to some degree, socially appropriate behavior for boys and low levels of psychological problems among elementary schoolchildren (Bronstein et al., 1993; cf. Gamer et al., 1994). Moreover, among young children, general maternal expressiveness has been positively related to children'sskill in understanding emotion in others, including skill in labeling emotions, knowledge of situations involving emotion, and greater perspective-taking ability (Halberstadt et al., in press). In addition, among adults, general FE has been associated with low levels of dismissing emotion and high levels of preoccupation with emotion in a measure of adult attachment strategies (Bell, 1998).

Findings for positive FE are especially clear. Intensity of parents' positive expressiveness has been linked to high sociometric status and children's prosocial behavior (Boyum & Parke, 1995; Fabes et al., 1994; MacDonald & Parke, 1984), as well as to toddlers' ability to self-soothe in some contexts (Gamer, 1995). Similarly, frequency of mothers' positive expressivity has been correlated with preschoolers' prosocial behavior (caregiving) with a young sibling (Gamer et al., 1994). Denham and Grout (1992) found children's social competence (assessed by teachers) was positively associated with mothers' reports of intense happiness and relatively infrequent tension. In their review of the literature, Halberstadt et al. (in press) found that positive FE tended to be positively associated with aggregate indices of social competence, prosocial behavior, popularity, and low aggression. Moreover, positive FE was related to high adjustment and resiliency to stress in six of seven studies. Furthermore, Halberstadt et al. reported a preponderance of positive relations between positive FE and young children's knowledge of emotion expressions or situations and affective perspective-taking ability, but not the use of display rules.

In contrast, high overall levels of strong negative emotions, such as anger by family members, seem to be linked with low social competence in children, as indexed by low sociometric status (Boyum & Parke, 1995), low levels of prosocial behavior and sympathy (Denham & Grout, 1992; Eisenberg, Fabes, Carlo, Troyer, et al., 1992; also see Denham, 1997; Denham, Renwick-DeBardi, & Hewes, 1994), less negotiation in conflict (Dunn & Brown, 1994), and poor performance on emotion-understanding tasks (Dunn & Brown, 1994). Dominant negative emotion, as expressed in adults' families of origin, also has been linked to a preoccupation with relationship (i.e., attachment) issues in adulthood. In their review, Halberstadt et al. (in press) found that negative FE (regardless of type of negative emotion) generally was related to low social competence and high levels of aggression; findings for popularity, prosocial behavior, and adjustment were mixed. Recall, however, that many measures of negative FE include dominant and submissive negative emotions.

One critical factor may be whether the expression of externalizing emotions by parents is directed at the child or at others. Crockenberg (1985) found a link between mothers' child-directed anger and toddlers' lack of empathic responding. In addition, Denham, Zoller, and

Couchoud (1994) and Dunn and Brown (1994) found that maternal anger expressed during interactions with children was negatively correlated with emotional understanding. In contrast, maternal reports of externalizing emotions that were not necessarily directed at the child were positively correlated with prosocial behavior (Denham & Grout, 1993). It is reasonable to expect more disruption of learning and a greater self-focus if parental anger is directed at the child than if it is merely observed. Consistent with this idea, in one study, maternal expression of anger toward the child was related to a low level of understanding of anger (and was unrelated to understanding other emotions). In contrast, exposure to anger during family conflict was positively related to an understanding of sadness (and was unrelated to an understanding of anger, happiness, and fear; Gamer et al., 1994).

It also may be important to differentiate between hostile and softer negative emotions when examining the relation of FE to markers of quality of social functioning. Relations between dominant FE and social functioning are likely to be clearer than those for submissive (nonhostile) negative emotion. For example, Jones and Eisenberg (1997) found a negative relation between dominant FE and elementary school girls' social competence at school. No overall relation was obtained for submissive negative emotion for the total sample, although submissive emotion related positively to social competence for minority (primarily Black and Hispanic children), but not White children. Indeed, relations for parental expression of submissive negative emotion appear to be complex. Submissive negative FE has been positively correlated with kindergarten and third graders' knowledge about display rules, but with low levels of other-oriented explanations for the use of display rules (Abbey & Jones, 1993), as well as with low levels of toddlers' self-soothing (a type of emotion regulation) when alone or with a stranger (Gamer, 1995). Preschoolers' knowledge of emotions was greater when mothers reported more frequent tension or very intense sadness (Denham & Grout, 1992). In addition, whereas negative dominant FE has been associated with children's use of more self-protective display rules, negative submissive FE has been associated with less prosocial display rules (Jones, Abbey, & Cumberland, 1998). The kinds of softer negative emotions that are expressed (e.g., sadness, depression, anxiety), as well as the intensity and chronicity of such negative emotions, are likely to be moderators of their effects on quality of social behavior.

Expression of negative emotion in the family may be positively related to social competence and prosocial behavior primarily when the expression of negative affect leads to discourse about feelings and explanations by parents for the negative affect. Dunn and Brown (1994) found that mothers were more likelyto discuss feelings when children were experiencing negative emotions, and that this pattern was more true for families that were low or average in overall expression of negative emotion. Parents high in negative FE may be more likely than other parents simply to react with negative emotion rather than to try to discuss the situation. Low levels of parental negative emotion may serve an instructional purpose, whereas high levels of intense negative emotions, such as anger, may be disruptive to learning about emotion (Gamer et al., 1994), particularly if parental expression of emotion occurs in the context of frequent expressions of hostility. Thus, the relation of negative FE to social competence may be nonlinear, with moderate levels of exposure to negative parental emotion fostering children's understanding of negative emotion and social competence more than low or high levels of negative familial or parental expressiveness.

Looking across age levels, it is interesting to note that in studies of adults, general FE (usually positive and negative FE combined) has been negatively related to college students', but not children's, skill in identifying facial and vocal communications (in seven studies; Halberstadt et al., in press). Halberstadt et al. suggested that adolescents and adults in highly expressive families may not have to work very hard to understand family members' frequent and clear communications, whereas adolescents and adults in less expressive families may need to develop skills for understanding the subtle, masked, or blended communications that occur

less frequently and for limited duration in their families. It is also possible, however, that adults' reports of their family of origin's FE are especially reflective of negative FE (or even dominant negative FE), and that exposure to such negative emotion throughout childhood and adolescence undermines learning about others' emotional expressions.

Clarity of parental expressivity is another variable that has been related to children's social competence, although relevant data are scant. Daly, Abramovitch, and Pliner (1980) found that mothers who expressed emotion accurately had children who were relatively skilled at decoding. Similarly, Camras et al. (1988) found a positive relation between mothers' sending (encoding) ability and children's knowledge of emotion. In addition, Boyum and Parke (1995) found that parental reports of clarity of expressiveness were associated with low levels of teacher-rated aggression, particularly for girls in relation to mothers' reported clarity. High clarity of mothers' negative expressiveness also predicted girls' prosocial behavior, whereas low clarity of positive expressiveness was associated with girls' verbal aggression. Furthermore, in a study of preschoolers, accuracy of mothers' simulations of anger tended to be correlated with children's concern and sympathy in response to peers' emotional displays (Denham, Renwick-DeBardi, & Hewes, 1994). When parents' emotional expressions are clear, it is easier for children to understand them and to learn about others' emotions and their causes. However, given the negative relations between FE and adults' ability to decode emotion (i.e., decipher emotion from nonverbal cues; Halberstadt et al., in press), it is possible that clarity of parental expressivity is related to a cognitive understanding of emotion, but not decoding ability in adulthood.

As noted previously, it has been hypothesized that parental or family expressiveness influences the quality of children's social behavior either directly or indirectly through its effects on children's expression of emotion or understanding of emotion. The literature on the relation between parental and child expressivity reviewed here provides some support for the argument that children's expression of emotion could mediate the relation between parental expressivity and the quality of children's social functioning. As noted earlier, however, data pertaining to the relation of negative familial expressiveness to children's understanding of emotion are not consistent and, by adulthood, general FE is associated with less ability to decode others' emotions (Halberstadt et al., in press). In one study that directly tested children's understanding of emotion as a mediator of the effects of FE on social functioning, parental expression of emotion generally was unrelated to children's understanding of emotion and, thus, was not a substantial mediator of the effects of FE (Cassidy et al., 1992). Thus, at this time, there is not much support for the view that children's understanding of emotion mediates a relation between FE and positive social functioning. However, more research is needed in which type, intensity, and clarity of parental expressivity are examined.

The role of sex of child in parental expressivity. Brody (1993) suggested that mothers may express emotions differently to boys and girls because of innate differences in boys' and girls' expressiveness, which result in mothers trying to contain the greater emotional responsiveness of sons by displaying less emotion toward or around them. Brody (1993) further proposed that because mothers restrict their expressions with sons, boys learn to inhibit their facial expressions and girls learn to amplify expressions, which could account for the sex difference in the encoding of emotion by adulthood (e.g., Buck, 1984; see Brody, 1993), albeit perhaps not in childhood (e.g., Yarczower & Daruns, 1982). Moreover, it has been suggested that parents show a greater variety of emotions to their daughters as compared to sons (Brody, 1993).

In fact, there may be differences in parents' expression of emotions to sons and daughters, although parental expressivity to sons and daughters likely differs depending on the emotion. During mother-child interactions, mothers have been found to be more emotionally expressive

to daughters than sons, especially in regard to positive emotion (Gamer et al., 1997; Malatesta et al., 1989; see Brody, 1993). Although Malatesta-Magai et al. (1994) did not find that mothers showed more positive facial affect to daughters than sons in a play session with 34-month-olds, they did find that mothers expressed more positive emotion vocally. Moreover, there is some evidence that parents express more anger or general negative affectivity toward their sons (e.g., Garner et al., in press), although sometimes vocally and not facially (Malatesta-Magai et al., 1994). Keep in mind, however, that this does not necessarily mean that there is a gender difference in overall exposure to anger (i.e., in the family). At this time, the scant data suggest that sex is an important variable to consider in work on parental expressiveness of emotion; however, it is not clear if differences in parents' emotional expressiveness with sons and daughters have implications for the development of children's emotional and social competence.

Summary. It appears that positive familial expressivity is generally associated with offsprings' expression of positive emotion, high-quality social functioning, and an understanding of others' emotion for young children, although not adults. These relations are not surprising because parents who frequently express positive emotion are likely to be warm, supportive, and use constructive childrearing practices, such as coaching about emotion. Findings for familial expression of negative emotion are not as clear. Negative FE tends to be positively associated with young and grown children's expression of negative emotion; however, links with social behavior and an understanding of others' emotion are mixed. It is likely that the type and intensity of negative FE, as well as whether negative emotion is directed toward the child, are critical moderators of the relation of negative FE to child outcomes. In general, there is some support for the notion that hostile negative parental emotion, especially if intense and directed at the child, is associated with low quality of social functioning and low levels of understanding of emotion. However, findings for nonhostile negative emotions such as parental anxiety and sadness are considerably less clear. The type, intensity, and chronicity of parents' expression of softer negative emotions may be critical factors for determining their effects on children.

Child Effects

As discussed previously, characteristics of the child doubtlessly affect both parents' choice of ERSBs and moderate the effects of specific ERSBs on child outcomes. Some of the findings on parental reactions to children's negative emotion (e.g., comforting) and parental use of socializing language highlight the importance of temperamental, personality, and behavioral differences among children in the process of the socialization of emotion. We already have discussed some of the ways that parental ERSBs may be influenced by sex of the child. In this section, we review some of the existing work on two other important child characteristics that likely affect parental socialization of emotion. Unfortunately, most of the work on child characteristics pertains to characteristics that might influence parents' use of ERSBs, not to how the effects of ERSBs are moderated by child characteristics (i.e., how the effects of ERSBs are different for children varying on a given characteristic). It is likely that children of different sexes, developmental levels, and temperaments or personalities are affected differently by parental ERSBs; however, empirical data on this topic are scant.

Temperamental and Personality Characteristics of the Child

Although the data are correlational, there are some findings consistent with the notion that parental ERSBs may be, in part, a reaction to child characteristics. Parental reports of their reactions to children's negative emotions sometimes are correlated with their assessments of their children's emotional intensity and regulation (Eisenberg et al., in press). For example, in a study with 4- to 6-year-olds, mothers reported that they were relatively punitive and avoidant in reaction to children's negative emotions if they viewed their children as high in negative

emotionality or low in the ability to regulate attention (an aspect of emotion regulation). In contrast, mothers tended to report more supportive reactions to negative emotions if they believed their child to be attentionally well regulated (i.e., able to voluntarily shift and focus attention; Eisenberg & Fabes, 1994). In another study, fathers', as well as mothers', reports of nonsupportive reactions to their children's negative emotion were associated with parental perceptions that their child was prone to intense emotions, with significant relations holding primarily for same-sex children (Eisenberg, Fabes, & Murphy, 1996). Similarly, Casey and Fuller (1994) found that mothers reported that they would try to regulate their children in situations involving children's anger if their children were temperamentally prone to fear, anger or frustration, and sadness. It is possible that parents' perceptions of their children's temperament partially reflect parents' own needs, beliefs, or characteristics rather than the child's true emotionality. However, in the Eisenberg, Fabes, and Murphy (1996) study, mothers' and fathers' reports of children's negative emotional intensity were positively intercorrelated, so it is doubtful that parental perceptions were entirely inaccurate. Moreover, there is some evidence that parental perceptions of children's temperament are based, at least in part, on reality and are valid measures of children's temperament (Rothbart & Bates, 1998). Unfortunately, to our knowledge, there is no research comparing relations between children's temperament or personality and parents' ERSBs toward different children in the same family, although research of this sort would help to clarify the effect of children's characteristics on parental emotion-related reactions.

Parents' perceptions of children's vulnerability to negative emotion are one example of how parents' perceptions of their children—probably based, in part, on reality—may affect their emotion-related interactions and discussion of emotion. In a study of kindergartners and second graders (Fabes et al., 1994), mothers were asked to tell stories with emotional themes (e.g., a pet dog dying) to their children from illustrated picture books with no words in them. Mothers' behavior and affect while telling the stories varied as a function of their perceptions of their children's age and emotional vulnerability. Kindergartners were viewed by mothers as more emotionally reactive to others' distress than were second graders, and mothers were higher on an index of positive versus negative facial emotion when telling the stories to kindergartners than second graders. Mothers of younger children, in comparison to mothers of second graders, appeared to try to minimize or modulate children's negative emotional responses to the stories by displaying higher levels of positive emotion or avoiding the display of too much negative facial emotion while telling the stories. This pattern of maternal facial displays was evident particularly for mothers of young children who believed that their child was prone to relatively high emotional arousal when exposed to others' negative emotions. It is likely that mothers who viewed their children as especially vulnerable to vicariously induced distress attempted to help modulate the level of negative emotion experienced by their children during the storytelling session. Recall that a high level of vicarious emotional arousal seems to induce personal distress, not sympathy. Buffering children's negative emotionality seemed to reflect appropriate parenting because mothers' displays of positive versus negative facial expressions while telling the stories were positively related with kindergarten children's helpfulness in another situation.

In contrast, mothers who viewed their older children (i.e., second graders) as emotionally reactive to exposure to others' negative emotions tended to be less involved and less warm in the storytelling context than were mothers who viewed their second graders as less reactive. These mothers may have backed off' from socialization efforts that would actively involve their children in a distressing experience (Fabes et al., 1994). Whereas young children may be expected to be vulnerable to others' negative emotionality, children who are particularly reactive by second grade may be those who have difficulty dealing with negative emotion in general.

In research with younger children, mothers engaged in more comforting of their toddlers if the children avoided a fear-eliciting stimulus, a finding consistent with the view that mothers altered their behavior as a function of the child's fearfulness (Diener, Mangelsdorf, Fosnot, & Kienstra, 1997). As discussed previously, similar findings have been obtained in work with 1- to 3-year-olds (Grolnick et al., 1997).

At this time, there is relatively little work on the reciprocal influence of parents and children in the socialization of emotion. However, it is clear from the work on aggression and negative emotionality in the family that the direction of influence is not unidirectional from parent to child (e.g., Cook et al., 1991; Patterson, 1982). A challenging task for the future is to unravel the complex interplay of parental emotion-related displays and behaviors to children's emotional reactions, emotional displays, and social behavior.

Developmental Level

At this point in time, there is relatively little information on the moderating effects of age on the socialization of emotion (e.g., Fabes et al., 1994). Nonetheless, some research findings are consistent with the hypothesis that the relations between parental ERSBs and child outcomes are moderated by the child's developmental level.

For example, Fabes et al.'s (1994) findings regarding maternal expression of positive versus negative emotion when telling children potentially distressing stories can be interpreted as indicating that children of different developmental levels, as reflected in age, elicit different emotion-related reactions from parents. Other findings also indicate that parents' emotion-related behaviors vary with the age of the child. For example, mothers' references to emotions in their discussions with infants and toddlers increase with age (Beeghly et al., 1986; Capatides & Bloom, 1993), although encouragement for emotional expression may decrease for infants in the first 6 months of life (Malatesta & Haviland, 1982). Mothers also may use more facial affect, but less vocal affect, as their children age in the toddler years (Malatesta-Magai et al., 1994).

Moreover, the socialization of emotion may be affected by the child's physical development. For example, when children begin to crawl and walk, parents' expectations for their children change, as do their displays of emotion. Parents display more anger and intense forms of expression to children who are mobile than to premobile infants (Campos, Kermoian, & Zumbahlen, 1992). This is probably because there is more need for parents to communicate disapproval to mobile infants who can engage in a wider range of behavior. In addition, mothers of 2- to 3½-year-olds are less supportive and attentive to, and more critical of, older than younger children's expressions of anger (Radke-Yarrow & Kochanska, 1990).

These are just a few ways that parents adjust their emotion-related behavior to children's developmental level. Doubtlessly, there are many other examples. Equally important, the same parental emotion-related behavior may have a different effect on children's emotion-related functioning depending on the child's age. Older children are better regulated and have a better understanding of emotion (see Saarni, Mumme, & Campos, 1998); moreover, societal and familial expectations change with the child's age and development. Thus, the same parental behavior may have a different meaning and impact for children of different ages (Grusec & Goodnow, 1994).

Conclusion

Much of the literature concerning the socialization of emotion is recent, and it still contains large gaps. Nonetheless, it is possible to draw some tentative conclusions from the extant data. For example, it is likely that parental nonsupportive reactions to children's negative emotions

are associated with children's negative emotionality and low social and emotional competence. Moreover, causality likely is bidirectional, with parents influencing children and vice versa (Eisenberg et al., in press). Findings in regard to parental supportive reactions to children's emotions are less consistent, although there is some initial evidence that maternal suggestions and modeling of active coping with distress are positively related to children's coping and socioemotional development. Especially for reactions such as comforting, it appears that parental reactions often are in response to children's distress or lack of ability to deal with emotion-evoking situations. It is possible that parental comforting, sensitivity, and contingency to children's emotions have a substantial causal influence on children's emotional and social functioning early in development, but that the causal relation becomes increasingly bidirectional (or even weighted toward child characteristics and behaviors eliciting parental reactions) as children age.

It is likely that the processes or mechanisms linking parental ERSBs to significant developmental outcomes differ somewhat for children's expression of positive and negative emotions, or even for different negative emotions. At this time, little is known about parental reactions to, and discussion of, positive emotions. In regard to negative emotions, parental negative reactions to children' s sadness often may be associated with a different constellation of parental beliefs and emotion-related behaviors than their negative reactions to children's anger, particularly if the sadness is justified. Empirical findings may be more interpretable if researchers differentiate among various emotions in future work on the socialization of emotion.

Parental expressivity also is related to children's emotionality and social functioning, although there are numerous possible explanations for these relations. Moreover, the pattern of relations is not simple, in part because positive, soft negative, and hostile negative emotions may be associated with different outcomes. Moreover, it is difficult, but perhaps critical, to distinguish between familial or parental expression of emotion in general (in all situations) and parental expression of emotion specifically toward the child. The two are likely to have somewhat different correlates and consequences; for instance, mere exposure to hostile negative emotion between parents that is not directed at the child may have some different effects than exposure to ongoing hostile parental emotion directed toward the child. Also, hostility directed toward the child may be more detrimental to the child's regulation and schemas of self and others than is mere observation of conflict between other people. Nonetheless, it is frequently difficult to differentiate negative emotion directed at the child and at others, both in the existing data and in real life.

Parental discussions of emotions also have been linked to children's understanding of emotion, although the pattern of relations between discussion of emotion and children' s social functioning is not very clear. Perhaps parental discussion of emotion is most likely to increase children' s understanding of emotion and socioemotional competence in the early years of life, whereas discussions of emotion increasingly become a means of trying to remediate child deficiencies as children age and are expected to behave in competent ways. Moreover, as discussed previously, it is likely that the functions of parental discussion of emotion are diverse; parents may use discussion of emotion in different ways with competent and less competent children. The correlates and consequences of parental discussion of emotion probably differ considerably depending on whether emotions are discussed as part of everyday conversations or primarily when disciplining children or trying to remediate social or emotional deficits.

Many factors such as age and sex of the child, parental characteristics, and subculture are likely to moderate relations between parental behaviors and beliefs and children's emotion-related behavior (see Figure 1). Thus, patterns of findings likely differ to some degree for boys and girls and for younger versus olderchildren, as well as for parents with differing characteristics.

In fact, the existing literature suggests that this is sometimes true. In addition, little is known about factors that mediate relations between parental and child emotion-related variables; the processes linking the two may differ depending on context.

In evaluating the literature on the socialization of emotion, it is important to keep in mind that many of the studies were conducted with relatively small samples. Thus, small or even moderate effects sometimes may not have been significant in many studies. By focusing on statistical significance when reviewing the literature, we may have painted a conservative picture of the role of parental socialization in children's emotional and social competence. Somewhat larger studies of the topic are in progress and are needed to augment the existing data on the topic.

It is not surprising that relations between most parental emotion-related behaviors (e.g., reactions and expressivity) and child outcomes are not very strong or highly consistent. There are many socializing forces besides parents, including siblings, peers, and teachers. For example, siblings and peers doubtlessly play a role in the socialization of emotion (e.g., Brown & Dunn, 1996; Dunn et al., 1987; Dunn & Brown, 1994), and there is initial evidence that some interventions designed to influence children's understanding and management of emotion in the school context have been successful in promoting emotional understanding and higher quality social functioning (e.g., Denham & Burton, 1996; Greenberg, 1996; Greenberg & Kusche, 1997; Greenberg, Kusche, Cook, & Quamma, 1995). Moreover, it is clear that culture plays an important role in emotion socialization (Bugental & Goodnow, 1998; Izard & Malatesta, 1987). Different cultures and subcultures appear to have somewhat different naive folk theories about emotions-where they come from, when and why they are experienced, and how one deals with them (Lillard, 1998; Lutz, 1987). For example, parental ideas about the usefulness of various emotions vary in different subcultures. In a study conducted in a tough working-class neighborhood, mothers valued anger in their daughters (rather than the suppression of anger, which seems to be valued in middle-class families) to the degree that it supported the goal of self-protection and impelled them to act quickly and decisively to defend themselves (Miller & Sperry, 1987). Moreover, there is initial evidence that environmental factors that vary across families, neighborhoods, and communities-such as stress-affect familial interactions and children's social and emotional functioning. For example, (Conger et al. 1992,Conger et al.1993) found that economic pressure was associated with maternal and paternal depression, which predicted marital conflict. There was also a positive relation between marital conflict and children's adjustment problems, which was at least partially mediated by the degree to which parenting was uninvolved and nonnurturant or hostile (Conger, Ge, Elder, Lorenz, & Simons, 1994). Thus, it is likely that factors such as stress influence parental displays of emotion, parents' discussion of negative emotions, and perhaps even parents' tolerance of their children's emotional displays. There are, as yet, few longitudinal studies on the topic of the socialization of emotion. Furthermore, given the nature of the questions, experimental data on the socialization of emotion in the home are very limited and likely to lack ecological validity. Moreover, relevant data from behavioral genetics studies (e.g., on twins) are lacking, so it is difficult to study the role of genetic factors in the socialization of emotion. Thus,firm conclusions regarding causality cannot be drawn.

Based on findings in behavioral genetics research, it seems clear that emotionality, particularly negative emotionality, and children's regulatory capacities (e.g., the abilities to focus attention and inhibit behavior) have a constitutional basis that is reflected in what is often labeled as temperament (Emde et al., 1992; Goldsmith, Buss, & Lemery, 1997; Kagan, 1998; Plomin & Stocker, 1989; Rothbart & Bates, 1998). Moreover, based on recent findings in behavioral genetics, some psychologists have questioned whether parental behaviors directed toward individual children have any substantial effects on children's social behavior and personality (e.g., Plomin, Chipuer, & Neiderhiser, 1994; Scarr, 1992). Unfortunately, little of the relevant

work on the socialization of emotion directly addresses the issue of genetic and environmental effects. Nonetheless, in our view, it is difficult to attribute all the findings in the literature solely to genetic factors. It is possible-even probable-that genetic factors may play an important role in associations between parents' ERSBs and children's emotional and social competence; for example, a genetic tendency in parent and child toward negative emotionality may enhance the observed association between punitive parenting and children's problems in dealing constructively with negative emotion. However, variations in parenting due primarily to environmental (including cultural) factors likely contribute to individual differences in parental ERSBs and to links between ERSBs and outcomes in children. It is becoming increasing clear that the models in behavioral genetics are not sufficiently complex (Turkheimer & Gottesman, 1996) and that genetics and the environment are intricately linked in regard to their effects (e.g., Wachs, 1993). Moreover, there is mounting evidence in longitudinal research that socializers can influence children's expression and regulation of emotion over time (e.g., Belsky, Fish, & Isabella, 1991; Gottman, Katz, & Hooven, 1997). Finally, people's beliefs about emotions and their expression appear to vary across cultures (e.g., Kitayama & Markus, 1994; Lillard, 1998).Consequently, we believe that knowledge about the socialization of the regulation of emotion is essential for understanding children's emotional development.

In conclusion, the study of the socialization of emotion is in its infancy and there is much to be learned. Nonetheless, the initial data are consistent with the view that the study of emotional socialization is a promising endeavor-one that is likely to yield more valuable information pertinent to understanding children's social and emotional competence.

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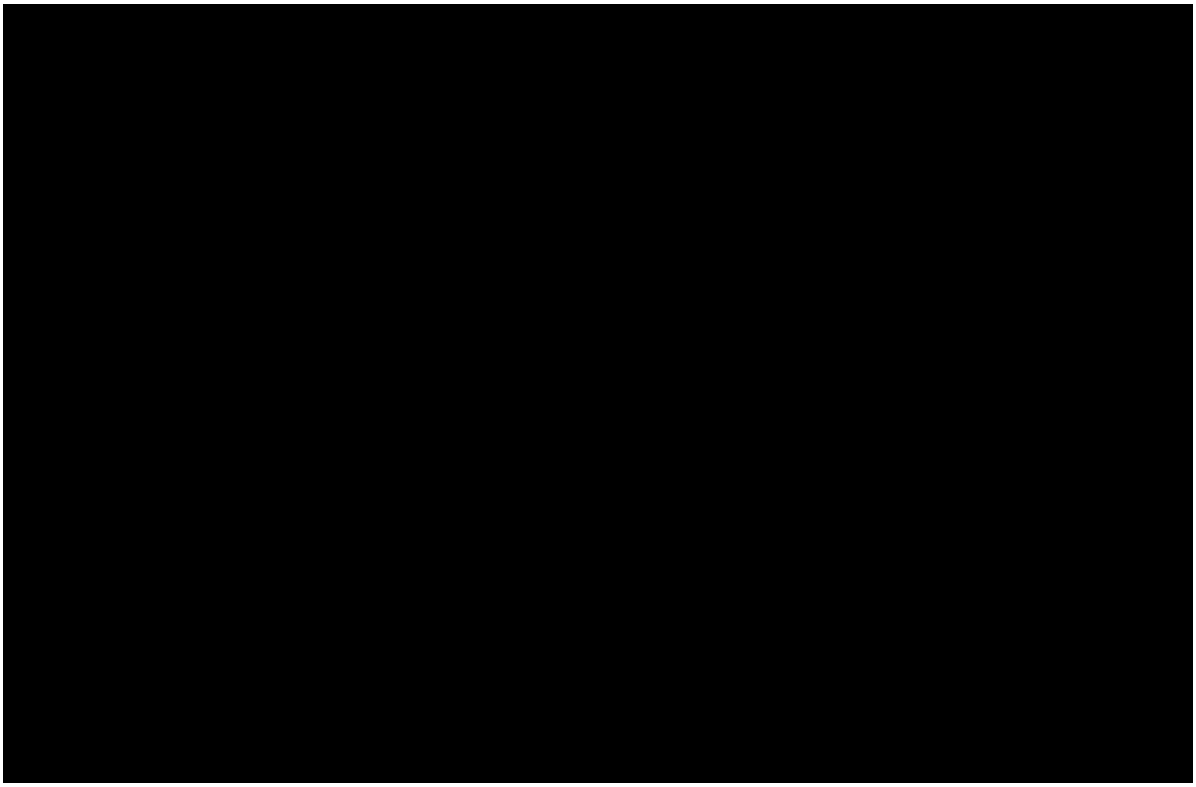

Figure 1.
A heuristic model of the socialization of emotion (see revised model in the Authors' Response on p. 320).