

Chapter 4. Parenting and friendships in the 21st century

Socialisation and relationships form an important part of our lives, from our earliest days through to old age. For children and youth, strong and positive relationships with families and peers are essential for well-being and healthy development. This chapter reviews the literature on the importance of positive and supportive relationships for children, taking a life course perspective on the relative roles of parents and peers at each stage of development. It then asks the question: have relationships with parents and peers changed in a digital world? What might this mean for 21st century children? The chapter provides an overview of parenting styles and what we know (and don't know) about their impact. It takes a special look at helicopter parenting across the OECD. It concludes with a look at friendships, both traditional and virtual.

Background

Relationships have a significant impact on one's life. Families play a fundamental role in children's cognitive, developmental, educational and health outcomes, particularly at the youngest ages. In addition to families, friends are also key – peers play an important part in social and emotional development, especially from middle childhood through adolescence.

Yet families are changing. The last two decades have seen declining fertility rates, decreasing rates of marriage and increasing rates of divorce, and rising numbers of single parent households. Governments across the OECD are in the process of legalising same-sex marriages. Parents also tend to be older, and have fewer children, which has largely coincided with increasing female labour market participation and educational attainment in recent decades (Bongaarts, Mensch and Blanc, 2017^[1]).

Outside the family setting, how individuals form relationships with their friends and peers has also changed. Increasing diversity means that children and adolescents in OECD countries are more likely to have peers from different cultural backgrounds, ethnicities and sexual orientations. And the omnipresence of technology has changed social interaction significantly. While texting, instant messaging and social networking sites are primarily used to reinforce existing relationships among friends, families and partners, online friendships and virtual peers are increasingly important.

This chapter will provide a brief overview of the importance of families and peers from a life course perspective, highlighting the impact on emotional well-being. It will then look specifically at parenting and friendship, examining what each one looks like in a digital age, and what these changes might mean for 21st century children.

Families and peers from a life course perspective

Numerous studies in sociology, economics and child development literature have documented the importance of families for children's cognitive, developmental, educational, labour and health outcomes (OECD, 2011^[2]).

In addition to families, peers can affect children in terms of their cognitive, social, emotional, behavioural and developmental outcomes through reciprocity, social support, socialisation and opportunity (Hay, 2005^[3]; Haynie and Osgood, 2005^[4]; Hinde et al., 1985^[5]; Ost, 2010^[6]; Reitz et al., 2014^[7]). They can also have negative impacts in terms of delinquency and aggression.

While relationships are important throughout life, the relative importance of the key players evolves as children develop. The following sections provide a brief overview looking at early childhood, middle childhood and adolescence.

Early childhood

In the earliest years, family relationships are central. Strong parent-child attachment and parenting characterised by nurturing care and support are often cited as protective factors for positive physical, social and emotional development (Chan, Lake and Hansen, 2017^[8]; OECD, 2015^[9]). Consistent and responsive parenting during early childhood is a strong predictor of cognitive and social growth and linked to healthy interpersonal relationships across the lifespan (Schneider, Atkinson and Tardif, 2001^[10]).

Family disruptions, distress and conflicts can influence child outcomes, both in the short and long run. Ineffective parenting, parental depression or psychological issues, stress and parental relationship issues are some of the mechanisms through which family structures and relationships can have a lasting negative impact on child development and well-being later in life (Carlson and Corcoran, 2001^[11]).

In addition to families, children start forming relationships with their peers from the first years of their lives. Social skills that can enhance peer relations, such as joint attention, emotion regulation, control and imitation begin to consolidate during the preschool years.

Middle childhood

Family support during middle childhood is still key. Secure attachments support positive emotional development and pro-social behaviours, which are also correlated with good peer relations (Hartup, 1992^[12]). Many of the risk and protective factors for early childhood have similar effects during middle childhood. Children who undergo family stress during this period tend to show more behaviour problems and marginal decreases in academic achievement (Duncan et al., 2012^[13]). Children and youth who are exposed to harsh and nonresponsive parenting during early childhood on top of recent traumatic events also tend to have higher levels of internalising and externalising problems (Jaffee et al., 2015^[14]).

These adverse effects often extend to peer relations. A longitudinal study of children from ages 6 to 13 found that early behavioural problems such as disruptiveness and withdrawal are linked to peer rejection and low "friendedness" in middle childhood (Pedersen et al., 2007^[15]). Peer rejection and feeling disliked by your peers have been shown to be a strong predictor of having difficulties in school, such as truancy, dropout and disciplinary problems (Hartup, 1992^[12]).

Adolescence

Adolescence is an important transitional period. Adolescents gain more independence and autonomy and spend more time with their peers. This is generally good news: 15-year-olds who reported spending time with their peers were more likely to report higher life satisfaction and a host of other positive outcomes (OECD, 2017^[16]).

However, adolescents can also experience increased pressure to fit in at a time when brain development is still ongoing. Evidence from neurodevelopmental studies suggests that an imbalance between affective and cognitive control brain regions can contribute towards an increase in risk taking behaviours during adolescence (Telzer et al., 2015^[17]).

Despite the importance of peers at this stage, family still plays a key role. Difficult family relationships and low family satisfaction are significantly linked with adolescent depression and low self-esteem (Stavropoulos et al., 2015^[18]). These effects can be long lasting: poor parental contact and poor peer relationships (i.e. not being happy with classmates, spending time alone) were significant predictors of adult mental and functional health (Landstedt, Hammarström and Winefield, 2015^[19]).

Parenting in the 21st century

Parents often feel enormous pressure to help their children succeed, whether it be in making friends, at school, or beyond. However, parents who turn to the Internet for help will find a bewildering amount of information: the simple English keyword "parenting" yields 385 000 000 results in less than 0.5 seconds.¹ Every kind of parenting style imaginable is promoted, from positive parenting to holistic parenting, free-range parenting, tiger

parenting and more. This plethora of parenting styles raises the question: has parenting really changed in the modern age? And if so, what does this mean for parents, their children, and ultimately, education?

Traditional parenting styles

The standard parenting typology has two dimensions: demandingness and responsiveness. Demandingness refers to high expectations for child behaviour and obedience as well as firm enforcement of family rules. Responsiveness refers to the degree to which parents express warmth, acceptance and respect for the child's developmental needs. These two dimensions yield four types of parenting styles in the literature (Pellerin, 2005^[20]):

- *Authoritative*: parents who are both demanding and responsive. They communicate effectively with their children, praise them when they are well-behaved and discipline them when they are not. This type of parenting is associated with a number of positive outcomes in children, including high levels of academic achievement, greater self-esteem and self-efficacy (Guyer et al., 2015^[21]), and a lower likelihood of bullying (both as perpetrator and victim) (Georgiou, Ioannou and Stavrinides, 2017^[22]).
- *Authoritarian*: parents who are demanding yet not responsive. They tend to use power, prohibition and punishment to control and achieve obedience (Chen, Dong and Zhou, 1997^[23]). This type of parenting has been linked to various negative effects on child mental health, including depressive symptoms (Uji et al., 2014^[24]; King, Vidourek and Merianos, 2016^[25]). The relationship between authoritarian parenting and academic development is inconsistent across countries and cultures.
- *Permissive*: parents who are very responsive but not demanding. They are usually described as accepting, loving and non-punitive; they set few rules and standards for child behaviours, emphasising freedom more than responsibility. Children of permissive parents tend to have lower academic achievement and engagement (Lamborn et al., 1991^[26]), and youth with permissive parents are more likely to be engaged in bullying of others (Dehue et al., 2012^[27]). However they have also been found to have higher self-esteem, at least in some cultures (Calafat, 2014^[28]).
- *Neglectful*: parents who are neither demanding nor responsive. They offer little supervision, have no expectation for behaviours and show little to no affection and support. Children of neglectful parents tend to have the lowest levels of academic achievement, are more likely to be aggressive, disruptive and non-cooperative, and experience emotional problems, such as depression and suicide ideation (Hildyard and Wolfe, 2002^[29]; Singh and Behmani, 2018^[30]).

Evolution of parenting styles

In addition to traditional parenting styles, a large number of other approaches exist. Many are promoted as a “new” way of parenting that will help children be more successful in school, at work or in life more broadly. However, many of the claims made about the potential positive impacts of modern parenting styles are not born out by research or, in fact, researched at all. Table 4.1 provides an overview of the various parenting styles, traditional and modern, and the (potential) effects on children. It also indicates to what extent the claims of impact have been the subject of academic study.

Table 4.1. Overview of parenting styles

Types of parenting, potential effects claimed, whether or not research exists/supports those claims.

Types	Definition	Potential effects on children	Research
<i>Traditional Styles</i>			
Authoritarian	Characterised by high control (demandingness) and low warmth (responsiveness).	Children develop behavioural and emotional problems as well as inadequate social skills.	Extensive
Authoritative	Characterised by high control (demandingness) and high warmth (responsiveness).	Children have positive academic, social, emotional, and physical developmental outcomes.	Extensive
Permissive	Characterised by low control (demandingness) and high warmth (responsiveness).	Children have lower academic achievement and engagement; however show higher self-esteem in some cultures.	Extensive
Uninvolved/ Neglectful	Characterised by low control (demandingness) and low warmth (responsiveness).	Children are prone to bullying (and being bullied), mental ailments, and academic failure.	Extensive
<i>"Modern" styles (not all are new)</i>			
Attachment/ Intuitive/ Natural	Aimed at strengthening parent-child bond by quickly and consistently meeting the emotional and physical needs of a child.	Children develop a sense of security and a positive attitude to life, believing that the world is a good place.	No
Buddy	Placing popularity with their child above establishing limits or boundaries.	Children become spoiled and ill-behaved.	No
Free-range	Focusing on trusting children by equipping them with the skills to stay safe and then backing off.	Children grow up to be able to handle mistakes, take responsibility for their actions, as well as be more resilient and happy.	No
Helicopter	When parents constantly hover above their children to protect them from harm.	Children less likely to be resilient and more likely to experience anxiety and depression.	Since 2004
Incubator "hot" house	Putting their children into learning earlier than appropriate for their cognitive age and developmental level.	Children thrive above their peers, especially academically, OR they develop anxiety, perfectionism, and depression.	No
Lawnmower/ Snowplough	Clearing a path and mowing down potential obstacles in their child's way.	Children become insecure about their ability to overcome adversity. Teenagers become resentful of their parents' control.	No
Narcissistic/ Accessory	Narcissistic parents identify themselves with the accomplishments of their children.	Children' identity is threatened. Unhealthy co-dependency emerges, with both parent and child depending on each other for their sense of self-worth.	No
Paranoid	Obsessively keeping your child safe from any physical or psychological harm.	Children become more anxious and less confident.	No
Positive	Focusing on empowering children through unconditional support and guidance.	Children develop making decision by considering possibilities and learning that actions have consequences.	No
Quick-fix/ Band-Aid	Relying on fast solutions to temporarily fix a problem, instead of aiming for a real and lasting change.	Children learn to act based on warnings, rewards, or money and thus keep relapsing back to the same bad behaviours.	No
Slow/ Nurturant	A movement against hyper-parenting: providing time and space for children to find their own interests and become who they want to be.	Children develop the capability to face and handle troubles/ challenges in life.	No
Spiritual/ Holistic	Respecting a child's individuality and creating the space to develop his or her own beliefs.	Maximise innate wellness of the whole child by nurturing a child's physical, emotional, mental and spiritual health.	No
Tiger	Characterised by high levels of both negative (<i>strict rules</i>) and positive (<i>warmth and support</i>) parenting.	Children can either become more productive, motivated, and responsible OR they can struggle to function which may lead to depression, anxiety, and poor social skills.	Since 2014
Unconditional/ Conscious	Providing children with unconditional love and acceptance for who they are instead of what they do.	Children develop a high sense of self-esteem and self-worth.	No

As demonstrated by Table 4.1, there is a need for more research on the impact and effects of newer types of parenting. Gaps in our knowledge about the variety and impact of various parenting styles include:

- **Paucity of research:** Studies on modern parenting styles (e.g. tiger parenting, helicopter parenting, phubbing and sharenting) are limited in number and tend to uncritically reflect the practices, experience and opinions of parents.
- **Restricted range of methods:** most of the studies that do exist are based on surveys, questionnaires and self-reports. The lack of randomised controlled trials and longitudinal studies reduces our understanding of the causal relationships between parenting styles and the overall well-being of children. In addition, the lack of rigorous qualitative methods (such as focus groups or semi-structured interviews) including the child’s point of view results in the loss of rich information about how children experience different parenting styles.
- **Narrow cultural focus:** Studies in parenting styles tend to focus on Caucasian families in Western countries. As parenting is influenced by culture and context, a broader focus would help improve the validity and generalisability of findings (Gicevic et al., 2016^[31]).

Spotlight on helicopter parenting

Helicopter parenting is the practice of “hovering around” one’s child to protect them from potential harm. Although common across the OECD (see Table 4.2), there is little research on its impact. What research does exist is conflicting: on the one hand, children of helicopter parents are more likely to have lower grades, lower level of engagement at school, as well as lower self-efficacy and resilience (Shaw, 2017^[32]). It is also associated with depression, anxiety, binge drinking and sexual risk taking among college students as well as with lower levels of psychological well-being (Odenweller, Booth-Butterfield and Weber, 2014^[33]; LeMoyné and Buchanan, 2011^[34]; Segrin et al., 2012^[35]; Bendikas, 2010^[36]).

On the other hand, high parental involvement positively correlates with better psychological adjustment and life satisfaction among adult children and improved general physical health (Fingerman et al., 2012^[37]).

From an education perspective, helicopter parenting is challenging for teacher-parent relationships. Helicopter parents often question the authority of the teacher, side with their child in situations of conflict between the teacher and their child, and are very involved in the daily routine of the class, sometimes to an uncomfortable degree (Dor and Rucker-Naidu, 2012^[38]).

Table 4.2. Helicopter parenting around the world

Countries/languages	Terms
Austria/Germany	Helikopter-Eltern or Helikoptereltern (direct translation)
Canada/United States	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • helicopter parents • tiger mother/father • drone parents • overinvolved parents, overprotective parenting • snowplough parent (CAN) • free range parenting (opposite of helicopter parenting)

Chile/Mexico/Spain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • padres “hélicóptero” • padres sobreprotectores / hiperprotectores • hiperpaternidad
China	怪獸家長 (monster parents: from cradle until the child forms a family/or longer)
Czech Republic	vrtulníkové rodiče
Denmark	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • helikopter forældre (helicopter parent) • Krusing forældre (curling parent)
Estonia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ülehoolitsev vanem” (overcaring parent) • kuid ka “kanaema” (which is gendered, chicken mother)
Finland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • helikopterivanhemmuus” and “helikopterivanhempi” • curling-vanhemmuus (curling parenting) • gendered: “kalenteriäiti” (direct translation calendar mother)
Flanders/Netherlands	helikopterouder , synonyms “hyperouder,” “hyperopvoeder,”
France	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • parents hélicoptères • parents surprotecteurs • mère poule
Hungary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • helikopterszülő/ helikopter szülőség • borostyánszülő (ivy parent, who wraps around the child like ivy around a building)
Iceland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Þyrluforeldrar* (infrequent) • bómullarbörn (cotton wool kids)
Ireland/United Kingdom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cotton-wool culture • hyper-parenting
Australia/New Zealand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • overinvolved parents, overprotective parenting • micro-parenting (from micro-managing (NZ/AUS)) • lawnmower parent (Ireland) • to mollycoddle
Italy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • genitori elicottero (“helicopter parents”) • genitori lper-presenti • genitori-chioccia (hen parents)
Japan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • モンスターペアレンツ (monster parents: overprotective, mostly for school aged children) • ヘリコプターペアレンツ (helicopter parents: mostly for parents with college students) • 過保護 (kahogo): overprotective parents • 過干渉 (kakansho): excessive meddling • 過管理 (ka kan ri) excessive management/controlling
Korea	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 극성부모/교육 (overly motivated parenting) • 과잉보호 (overprotective parenting) • 헬리콥터 부모 (helicopter parenting) • 드론 부모 (the drone parents) • 돼지 엄마 (pig mother, one who has all the latest information related to education, schools, cram schools etc)
Latvia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pārrūpīgi vecāki” (overcaring parents) • “cāļu māte” (chicken mother)
Norway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • helikopterforeldre”, “curlingforeldre” • tiger parents”/“tigerforeldre”
Poland	nadopiekuńczych rodziców (over-protective parents)
Portugal/Brazil	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pais helicóptero • pai/mãe galinha’ (Portugal) • mãe coruja (owl mother) (Brazil)
Russia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • родитель-вертолёт or Вертолеты (Vertolety; helicopters) • “мама-наседка” or “мать-наседка” (hen mother)
Sweden	curlingförälder (overprotective parenting)
Turkey	korumaci ebeveyn
Viet Nam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cha mẹ ỉu trưc thẳg • bô ỉu mẹ ỉu trưc thẳg

Parenting behaviours in the digital world

In addition to parenting styles, there are also parenting behaviours that have emerged as a result of the omnipresence of technology in our lives. These are not neutral, and scholars are increasingly highlighting the potential negative impacts. Two examples are briefly explained below (see Chapter 6 for a more thorough discussion).

- *Phubbing*: also called "technoference", when technology use is associated with interruption in communication between parents and children or between couples. This behaviour appears to be very common: in one study, more than 50% of respondents reported not responding to their children when engaging with their mobile phones and more than 80% found it hard to look away from the phone even during conversations with their families (Hiniker et al., 2015^[39]). Impacts include a potential vicious cycle whereby parents become unresponsive to their children and/or respond harshly to misbehaviours (Radesky et al., 2015^[40]), while children experience distress when caregivers shift their attention to a digital device (Khourchvili, 2017^[41]) and engage in risky behaviours to regain parental attention (Kildare and Middlemiss, 2017^[42]).
- *Sharenting*: parents oversharing information about their children on social media. The emerging literature on "sharenting" is qualitative in nature and based mostly on surveys. "Sharenting" is a common practice among modern parents, especially mothers (Brosch, 2016^[43]; Muge Marasli et al., 2016^[44]). It allows parents to express pride in their children, to satisfy their need for self-realisation, social approval, as well as social comparison, as well as seek parenting-related advice and social support (Wagner and Gasche, 2018^[45]). Children, however, express frustration with parents oversharing, especially posting inappropriate photos of them (naked and semi-naked or showing them in unfavourable situations) (Hiniker, Schoenebeck and Kientz, 2016^[46]; Moser, Chen and Schoenebeck, 2017^[47]).

Box 4.1. Sharenting

Although parents enjoy "sharenting", several studies caution against possible risks, such as violating children's right to privacy, children getting embarrassed or hurt and the potential for digital risks in the future.

Some parents are well aware of these risks and engage in protective practices such as face-covering or blurring identifying information (Wagner and Gasche, 2018^[45]). Other suggested best practices include (Steinberg, 2017^[48]):

- familiarising themselves with the privacy policies of the sites with which they share
- setting up notifications to alert them when their child's name appears in a Google search result
- considering anonymous sharing and avoiding sharing their child's actual location
- giving their child "veto power" over online disclosures
- considering not sharing naked or semi-naked pictures of their child
- considering the effect sharing can have on their child's current and future sense of self and well-being.

Modern friendships

Friendships are essential to children, occupying a huge part of their time and attention while providing them with social, emotional and functional support during their growth (Foucault Welles, Van Devender and Contractor, 2010^[49]; Helliwell and Huang, 2013^[50]). As children go online at earlier ages and stay connected for longer, virtual interaction — liking pictures, gaming or chatting — has become an indispensable part of their daily lives (Hooft Graafland, 2018^[51]). As a result, modern children are increasingly making and developing friendships online (Zhang, 2016^[52]; Lenhart et al., 2015^[53]; Holloway and Livingstone, 2013^[54]).

Despite this, little is known about virtual peers.² Are they simply contacts children have online? When would they be considered friends (by traditional measures of friendship or by new ones)?

Understanding virtual friendships

As online communication evolves, the line between online and offline friendships becomes increasingly blurry. Early studies in the field generally defined the former as originating online and the latter as originating offline (Mesch and Talmud, 2007^[55]). However this no longer captures the complex reality of friendships that start in real life and then extend to digital worlds (e.g. friends who use Snapchat/ Instagram to keep in touch with schoolmates after school) or friendships that start online then extend to face-to-face settings (e.g. friends who meet through online games and then hang out in person) (Antheunis, Valkenburg and Peter, 2007^[56]; Parks and Floyd, 2006^[57]; Parks and Roberts, 1998^[58]).

In general, children meet online peers most commonly in virtual worlds, online games and social networking sites (SNS) (Livingstone et al., 2011^[59]; Lenhart et al., 2015^[53]). Adolescents are more likely to have a social media or video-sharing profile than younger children, although the percentage of 8-11 year-olds with an online presence is growing (Ofcom, 2019^[60]), see also Chapter 2). This increase in participation of younger users is notable, particularly since many social media platforms prohibit users under the age of 13 years old. Thus, the growing number of children from as young as three to five years old online also raises questions about the responsibilities of the industry and parents (see Chapters 6 and 10).

Comparing virtual to traditional friendships

Literature on friendships has explored two main questions: (1) How do children make friends? (2) What are features of high quality friendships, and what benefits are derived from them?

Making friends

Virtual friendships are influenced by the same factors that drive the formation of face-to-face friendships, although with some differences:

- *Homophily*: Children befriend those similar to them (either in personality or demographics) because such similarity is perceived as self-validating (Antheunis, Valkenburg and Peter, 2007^[56]). McPherson, Smith-Lovin, and Cook (2001^[61]) found that in traditional friendships, similarity of personality is a weaker determining factor than similarity in demographic characteristics—same race and ethnicity are the strongest predictors, followed by same age, religion, education,

occupation and gender. In virtual friendships, no evidence has been found to support homophily in gender, race, religion and education. Only homophily in age is documented: Utz and Jankowski (2016_[62]) found that players in virtual worlds and video games are much more likely to interact with other players of similar age.

- *Proximity*: Children traditionally befriend those in close physical proximity, as there are more opportunities for hanging out, exchanging information and participating in joint activities (Mesch and Talmud, 2006_[63]). Certain proximity mechanisms that predict real-life friendships also apply digitally. Avatar proximity—how close avatars stand to others—is important (Chesney et al., 2014_[64]): players in virtual worlds and online games tend to make friends with avatars standing around their own avatars instead of approaching and sending friend requests to random ones. However, in terms of physical geography, results are conflicting.
- *Status*: Children tend to befriend popular children who already have many friends. As in traditional friendships, status matters in virtual friendships: users with superior status are more likely to receive friend requests and form friendships online (Utz and Jankowski, 2016_[62]). The indicators of status vary according to digital platforms. On SNS, a high status means a long list of friends/contacts. In gaming, it means a high level of experience, a significant amount of virtual money, an elaborated avatar, and a premium account, which may require a monthly fee.
- *Social attraction*: Children traditionally befriend those to whom they feel socially attracted, as the communication is usually more pleasant (Berndt, Hawkins and Hoyle, 1986_[65]). By stimulating social exchange and interactions between friends, social attraction not only helps initiate friendship but also helps increase friendship quality (Reagans, 2005_[66]). Social attraction has been found to be significantly less salient in online friendships than in offline friendships (Antheunis, Valkenburg and Peter, 2007_[56]).

The quality and impact of friendships

There are three interrelated aspects of friendships:

- mutual caring: the idea that friends are responsive to each other's needs and are willing to help when necessary (Berndt, Hawkins and Hoyle, 1986_[65])
- companionship: the notion that friends enjoy spending time together, either through frequent communication or shared activities (Munn, 2012_[67])
- intimacy: the idea of self-disclosure where friends share personal and private information, thoughts and feelings with each other (Žurko, 2011_[68]; Cocking and Matthews, 2001_[69]).

High levels of mutual caring, companionship and intimacy indicate a high quality friendship. These three elements appear in both traditional and online friendships. In fact, it has been argued that digital worlds increase companionship and intimacy among children, as they can contact each other at any time as long as they have access to a connected device. Online friendships also help children who feel alienated by offline groups because they can find individuals with similar interests which may not fit into the norm of their (real-life) social context, for example children who are socially anxious, children with disabilities and LGBTQ+ children.

In sum

Families and peers have enormous influence on children and adolescents' well-being and later life outcomes. Yet our world is evolving and so is our concept of family. The dominant family model in the twentieth century – characterised by a breadwinning father and a mother taking care of the household and a number of children – has changed. Over the past fifty years the number of reconstituted families and single parent households has risen, families have become smaller and individuals are deciding to have children later in life, or not at all.

Styles of parenting are also evolving as parents seek to give their children the best start in life (e.g. helicopter parents). Social media permit parents and families to reach larger audiences with their curated images of themselves, and new parental behaviours are emerging as a result, not all of them positive. Although more research is needed on this topic, examples of “sharenting” and “phubbing/technoference” are already demonstrating the importance of understanding how technology use by adults can have an impact on the well-being of the children around them.

Outside the family setting, social interactions with friends have also shifted significantly in the last decade. Online friendships are important for children and youth, and texting, instant messaging and social networking sites are primarily used to reinforce existing relationships. The line between online and offline friendships is becoming increasingly blurry.

All of these issues will continue to increase in importance in the coming years. There is an important series of questions of how education (starting with early childhood and extending across the lifespan) can best support families, especially the poorest and most disadvantaged among them. Equally important is better charting the connections between the supporting players in a child's life (family and friends) and how they are evolving in our modern world. The following chapters address all of these themes in more detail.

Notes

¹ As of September 2019.

² In this chapter “virtual” peers and friendships will be used interchangeably with “online” and “digital” peers and friendships.

References

- Antheunis, M., P. Valkenburg and J. Peter (2007), “The quality of online, offline, and mixed-mode friendships among users of a social network site”, *Journal of Psychosocial Research on Cyberspace*, Vol. 6/3, <http://dx.doi.org/10.5817/CP2012-3-6>. [56]
- Bendikas, E. (2010), *Do Helicopter Parents Cause Life Turbulence for Their Offspring? Implications of Parental Psychological Control for College Students' Adjustment*, https://etd.ohiolink.edu/pg_10?0::NO:10:P10_ACCESSION_NUM:miami1276092075#abstract-files. [36]
- Berndt, T., J. Hawkins and S. Hoyle (1986), “Changes in friendship during a school year: Effects on children's and adolescents' impressions of friendship and sharing with friends”, *Child Development*, Vol. 57/5, p. 1284, <http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/1130451>. [65]

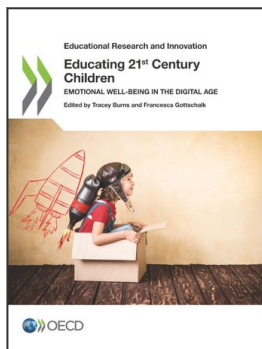
- Bongaarts, J., B. Mensch and A. Blanc (2017), “Trends in the age at reproductive transitions in the developing world: The role of education”, *Population Studies*, Vol. 71/2, pp. 139-154, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00324728.2017.1291986>. [1]
- Brosch, A. (2016), “When the child is born into the Internet: Sharenting as a growing trend among parents on Facebook”, *The New Educational Review*, <http://dx.doi.org/10.15804/tner.2016.43.1.19>. [43]
- Calafat, A. (2014), “Which parenting style is more protective against adolescent substance use? Evidence within the European context.”, *Drug & Alcohol Dependence*, Vol. 138, pp. 185-192, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.drugalcdep.2014.02.705>. [28]
- Carlson, M. and M. Corcoran (2001), “Family structure and children’s behavioral and cognitive outcomes”, *Journal of Marriage and Family*, Vol. 63/3, pp. 779-792, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-3737.2001.00779.x>. [11]
- Chan, M., A. Lake and K. Hansen (2017), “The early years: Silent emergency or unique opportunity?”, *The Lancet*, Vol. 389/10064, pp. 11-13, [http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(16\)31701-9](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(16)31701-9). [8]
- Chen, X., Q. Dong and H. Zhou (1997), “Authoritative and authoritarian parenting practices and social and school performance in chinese children”, *International Journal of Behavioral Development*, Vol. 21/4, pp. 855-873, <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/016502597384703> (accessed on 14 June 2018). [23]
- Chesney, T. et al. (2014), “Determinants of friendship in social networking virtual worlds”, *Communications of the Association for Information Systems*, Vol. 34/72, pp. 1397-1416, <http://aisel.aisnet.org/cais/vol34/iss1/72>. [64]
- Cocking, D. and S. Matthews (2001), “Unreal friends”, *Ethics and information technology*, Vol. 2/4, pp. 223-231, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1023/A:1011414704851>. [69]
- Dehue, F. et al. (2012), “Cyberbullying and traditional bullying in relation to adolescents’ perception of parenting”, *Journal of cybertherapy & rehabilitation*, Vol. 5/1, pp. 25-34, www.researchgate.net/publication/233919272_Cyberbullying_and_traditional_bullying_in_relation_to_adolescents'perception_of_parenting. [27]
- Dor, A. and T. Rucker-Naidu (2012), “Teachers’ attitudes toward parents’ involvement in school: Comparing teachers in the USA and Israel”, *Issues in Educational Research.*, Vol. 22, pp. 246-262, <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ997341>. [38]
- Duncan, G. et al. (2012), “The importance of early childhood poverty”, *Social Indicators Research*, Vol. 108/1, pp. 87-98, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s11205-011-9867-9>. [13]
- Fingerman, K. et al. (2012), “Helicopter parents and landing pad kids: Intense parental support of grown children”, *Journal of Marriage and Family*, Vol. 74/4, pp. 880-896, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-3737.2012.00987.x>. [37]
- Foucault Welles, B., A. Van Devender and N. Contractor (2010), *Is a Friend a Friend?*, ACM Press, New York, New York, USA, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1145/1753846.1754097>. [49]
- Georgiou, S., M. Ioannou and P. Stavrinides (2017), “Parenting styles and bullying at school: The mediating role of locus of control”, *International Journal of School & Educational Psychology*, Vol. 5/4, pp. 226-242, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/21683603.2016.1225237>. [22]

- Gicevic, S. et al. (2016), "Parenting and childhood obesity research: A quantitative content analysis of published research 2009-2015", *Obesity Reviews*, Vol. 17/8, pp. 724-734, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/obr.12416>. [31]
- Guyer, A. et al. (2015), "Temperament and parenting styles in early childhood differentially influence neural response to peer evaluation in adolescence", *Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology*, Vol. 43/5, pp. 863-874, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s10802-015-9973-2>. [21]
- Hartup, W. (1992), "Peer relations in early and middle childhood", in *Handbook of Social Development*, Springer, Boston, MA, https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-1-4899-0694-6_11. [12]
- Hay, D. (2005), "Early peer relations and their impact on children's development", *Encyclopedia on Early Childhood Development*, www.child-encyclopedia.com/peer-relations/according-experts/early-peer-relations-and-their-impact-childrens-development. [3]
- Haynie, D. and D. Osgood (2005), "Reconsidering peers and delinquency: How do peers matter?", *Social Forces*, Vol. 84/2, pp. 1109-1130, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1353/sof.2006.0018>. [4]
- Helliwell, J. and H. Huang (2013), "Comparing the happiness effects of real and on-line friends", *PLoS ONE*, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0072754>. [50]
- Hildyard, K. and D. Wolfe (2002), "Child neglect: Developmental issues and outcomes", *Child Abuse & Neglect*, Vol. 26/6-7, pp. 679-695, [http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0145-2134\(02\)00341-1](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0145-2134(02)00341-1). [29]
- Hinde, R. et al. (1985), "Incidence of "friendship" and behavior toward strong associates versus nonassociates in preschoolers", *Child Development*, Vol. 56/1, pp. 234-245, <http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/1130190>. [5]
- Hiniker, A., S. Schoenebeck and J. Kientz (2016), *Not at the Dinner Table: Parents' and Children's Perspectives on Family Technology Rules*, ACM Press, New York, New York, USA, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1145/2818048.2819940>. [46]
- Hiniker, A. et al. (2015), "Texting while parenting: How adults use mobile phones while caring for children at the playground", <http://dx.doi.org/10.1145/2702123.2702199>. [39]
- Holloway, D. and S. Livingstone (2013), *Zero to Eight. Young Children and Their Internet Use Zero to Eight*, LSE, London: EU Kids Online, <http://www.eukidsonline.net>. [54]
- Hoof Graafland, J. (2018), "New technologies and 21st century children: Recent trends and outcomes", *OECD Education Working Papers*, No. 179, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/e071a505-en>. [51]
- Jaffee, S. et al. (2015), "Interactive effects of early and recent exposure to stressful contexts on cortisol reactivity in middle childhood", *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, Vol. 56/2, pp. 138-146, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/jcpp.12287>. [14]
- Khourochvili, M. (2017), *Technology and Caregiver-child Interaction: The Effects of Parental Mobile Device Use on Infants*, York University, https://yorkspace.library.yorku.ca/xmlui/bitstream/handle/10315/34309/Khourochvili_Mariami_2017_Masters.pdf?sequence=2&isAllowed=y. [41]
- Kildare, C. and W. Middlemiss (2017), "Impact of parents mobile device use on parent-child interaction: A literature review", *Computers in Human Behavior*, Vol. 75, pp. 579-593, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/J.CHB.2017.06.003>. [42]

- King, K., R. Vidourek and A. Merianos (2016), “Authoritarian parenting and youth depression: Results from a national study”, *Journal of Prevention & Intervention in the Community*, Vol. 44/2, pp. 130-139, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10852352.2016.1132870>. [25]
- Lamborn, S. et al. (1991), “Patterns of competence and adjustment among adolescents from authoritative, authoritarian, indulgent, and neglectful families”, *Child Development*, Vol. 62/5, p. 1049, <http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/1131151>. [26]
- Landstedt, E., A. Hammarström and H. Winefield (2015), “How well do parental and peer relationships in adolescence predict health in adulthood?”, *Scandinavian Journal of Public Health*, Vol. 43/5, pp. 460-468, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1403494815576360>. [19]
- LeMoyne, T. and T. Buchanan (2011), “Does “hovering” matter? Helicopter parenting and its effect on well-being”, *Sociological Spectrum*, Vol. 31/4, pp. 399-418, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/02732173.2011.574038>. [34]
- Lenhart, A. et al. (2015), *Teens, Technology, and Friendships*, www.pewinternet.org/2015/08/06/teens-technology-and-friendships/. [53]
- Livingstone, S. et al. (2011), *Risks and Safety on the Internet: The Perspective of European Children: Full Findings and Policy Implications From the EU Kids Online Survey of 9-16 Year Olds and Their Parents in 25 Countries*, LSE: EU Kids online, <http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/33731/>. [59]
- McPherson, M., L. Smith-Lovin and J. Cook (2001), “Birds of a feather: Homophily in social networks”, *Annual Review of Sociology*, Vol. 27, pp. 415-444, www.researchgate.net/publication/200110353_Birds_of_a_Feather_Homophily_in_Social_Networks. [61]
- Mesch, G. and I. Talmud (2007), “Similarity and the quality of online and offline social relationships among adolescents in Israel”, *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, Vol. 17/2, pp. 455-465, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1532-7795.2007.00529.x>. [55]
- Mesch and Talmud (2006), “Online friendship formation, communication channels, and social closeness”, *International Journal of Internet Science*, Vol. 1/1, pp. 29-44. [63]
- Moser, C., T. Chen and S. Schoenebeck (2017), *Parents’ and Children’s Preferences About Parents Sharing About Children on Social Media*, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1145/3025453.3025587>. [47]
- Muge Marasli et al. (2016), “Parents’ shares on social networking sites about their children: Sharenting”, *The Anthropologist*, Vol. 24/2, pp. 399-406, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09720073.2016.11892031>. [44]
- Munn, N. (2012), “The reality of friendship within immersive virtual worlds”, *Ethics and Information Technology*, Vol. 14/1, pp. 1-10, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s10676-011-9274-6>. [67]
- Odenweller, K., M. Booth-Butterfield and K. Weber (2014), “Investigating helicopter parenting, family environments, and relational outcomes for millennials”, *Communication Studies*, Vol. 65/4, pp. 407-425, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10510974.2013.811434>. [33]
- OECD (2017), *PISA 2015 Results (Volume III): Students’ Well-being*. [16]
- OECD (2015), *Skills for Social Progress*, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, Paris, www.oecd-ilibrary.org/content/book/9789264226159-en. [9]
- OECD (2011), *Doing Better for Families*, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264098732-en>. [2]

- Ofcom (2019), *Children and Parents: Media Use and Attitudes Report 2018*, Ofcom, [60]
www.ofcom.org.uk/data/assets/pdf_file/0024/134907/Children-and-Parents-Media-Use-and-Attitudes-2018.pdf.
- Ost, B. (2010), “The role of peers and grades in determining major persistence in the sciences”, *Economics of Education Review*, Vol. 29/6, pp. 923-934, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.econedurev.2010.06.011>. [6]
- Parks, M. and K. Floyd (2006), “Making friends in cyberspace”, *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, Vol. 1/4, pp. 0-0, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1083-6101.1996.tb00176.x>. [57]
- Parks, M. and L. Roberts (1998), “‘Making moosic’: The development of personal relationships on line and a comparison to their off-line counterparts”, *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, Vol. 15/4, pp. 517-537, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0265407598154005>. [58]
- Pedersen, S. et al. (2007), “The timing of middle-childhood peer rejection and friendship: Linking early behavior to early-adolescent adjustment”, *Child Development*, Vol. 78/4, pp. 1037-1051, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8624.2007.01051.x>. [15]
- Pellerin, L. (2005), “Applying Baumrind’s parenting typology to high schools: Toward a middle-range theory of authoritative socialization”, *Social Science Research*, Vol. 34, pp. 283-303, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.ssresearch.2004.02.003>. [20]
- Radesky, J. et al. (2015), “Maternal mobile device use during a structured parent-child interaction task.”, *Academic pediatrics*, Vol. 15/2, pp. 238-44, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.acap.2014.10.001>. [40]
- Reagans, R. (2005), “Preferences, identity, and competition: Predicting tie strength from demographic data”, *Management Science*, Vol. 51/9, pp. 1374-1383, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1287/mnsc.1050.0389>. [66]
- Reitz, A. et al. (2014), “How peers make a difference: The role of peer groups and peer relationships in personality development”, *European Journal of Personality*, Vol. 28/3, pp. 279-288, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/per.1965>. [7]
- Schneider, B., L. Atkinson and C. Tardif (2001), “Child-parent attachment and children’s peer relations: A quantitative review.”, *Developmental psychology*, Vol. 37/1, pp. 86-100, www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/11206436. [10]
- Segrin, C. et al. (2012), “The association between overparenting, parent-child communication, and entitlement and adaptive traits in adult children”, *Family Relations*, Vol. 61/2, pp. 237-252, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-3729.2011.00689.x>. [35]
- Shaw, K. (2017), *Hovering or Supporting: Do Parenting Behaviours Affect Their College-offspring’s Perseverance?*, Miami University, https://etd.ohiolink.edu/etd.send_file?accession=miami1498148068465252&disposition=inline. [32]
- Singh, V. and R. Behmani (2018), “Parenting style and adolescent suicide ideation: A review”, *International Journal of Academic Research and Development*, Vol. 3/2, pp. 1245-1252, www.academicjournal.com/download/1848/3-2-186-322.pdf. [30]
- Stavropoulos, V. et al. (2015), “Low family satisfaction and depression in adolescence: The role of self-esteem”, *Journal of Educational and Developmental Psychology*, Vol. 5/2, p. 109, <http://dx.doi.org/10.5539/jedp.v5n2p109>. [18]
- Steinberg, S. (2017), *Sharenting – In Whose Interests? Parenting for a Digital Future*, <http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/79156/>. [48]

- Telzer, E. et al. (2015), “The quality of adolescents’ peer relationships modulates neural sensitivity to risk taking”, *Social Cognitive and Affective Neuroscience*, Vol. 10/3, pp. 389-398, [17]
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/scan/nsu064>.
- Uji, M. et al. (2014), “The impact of authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive parenting styles on children’s later mental health in Japan: Focusing on parent and child gender”, *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, Vol. 23/2, pp. 293-302, [24]
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s10826-013-9740-3>.
- Utz, S. and J. Jankowski (2016), “Making ’friends’ in a virtual world: The role of preferential attachment, homophily, and status”, *Social Science Computer Review*, Vol. 34/5, pp. 546-566, [62]
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0894439315605476>.
- Wagner, A. and L. Gasche (2018), “Sharenting: Making decisions about other’s privacy on social networking sites”, *Multikonferenz Wirtschaftsinformatik*, http://mkwi2018.leuphana.de/wp-content/uploads/MKWI_81.pdf. [45]
- Zhang, H. (2016), *Digital Literacy and Growth of Children in Urban China in the New Media Age*, [52]
<https://milunesco.unaoc.org/wp-content/uploads/Final-version-Digital-Literacyand-Growth-of-Children-in-Urban-China-in-the-New-Media-Age.pdf>.
- Żurko, M. (2011), “Friendship during adolescence : The necessity for qualitative research of close relationships”, *Polish Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 9/1, pp. 21-38, [68]
www.bibliotekacyfrowa.pl/Content/38639/02_Magdalena_Zurko.pdf.



From:
Educating 21st Century Children
Emotional Well-being in the Digital Age

Access the complete publication at:
<https://doi.org/10.1787/b7f33425-en>

Please cite this chapter as:

Burns, Tracey and Francesca Gottschalk (eds.) (2019), "Parenting and friendships in the 21st century", in *Educating 21st Century Children: Emotional Well-being in the Digital Age*, OECD Publishing, Paris.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1787/c9881f36-en>

This work is published under the responsibility of the Secretary-General of the OECD. The opinions expressed and arguments employed herein do not necessarily reflect the official views of OECD member countries.

This document and any map included herein are without prejudice to the status of or sovereignty over any territory, to the delimitation of international frontiers and boundaries and to the name of any territory, city or area.

You can copy, download or print OECD content for your own use, and you can include excerpts from OECD publications, databases and multimedia products in your own documents, presentations, blogs, websites and teaching materials, provided that suitable acknowledgment of OECD as source and copyright owner is given. All requests for public or commercial use and translation rights should be submitted to rights@oecd.org. Requests for permission to photocopy portions of this material for public or commercial use shall be addressed directly to the Copyright Clearance Center (CCC) at info@copyright.com or the Centre français d'exploitation du droit de copie (CFC) at contact@cfcopies.com.