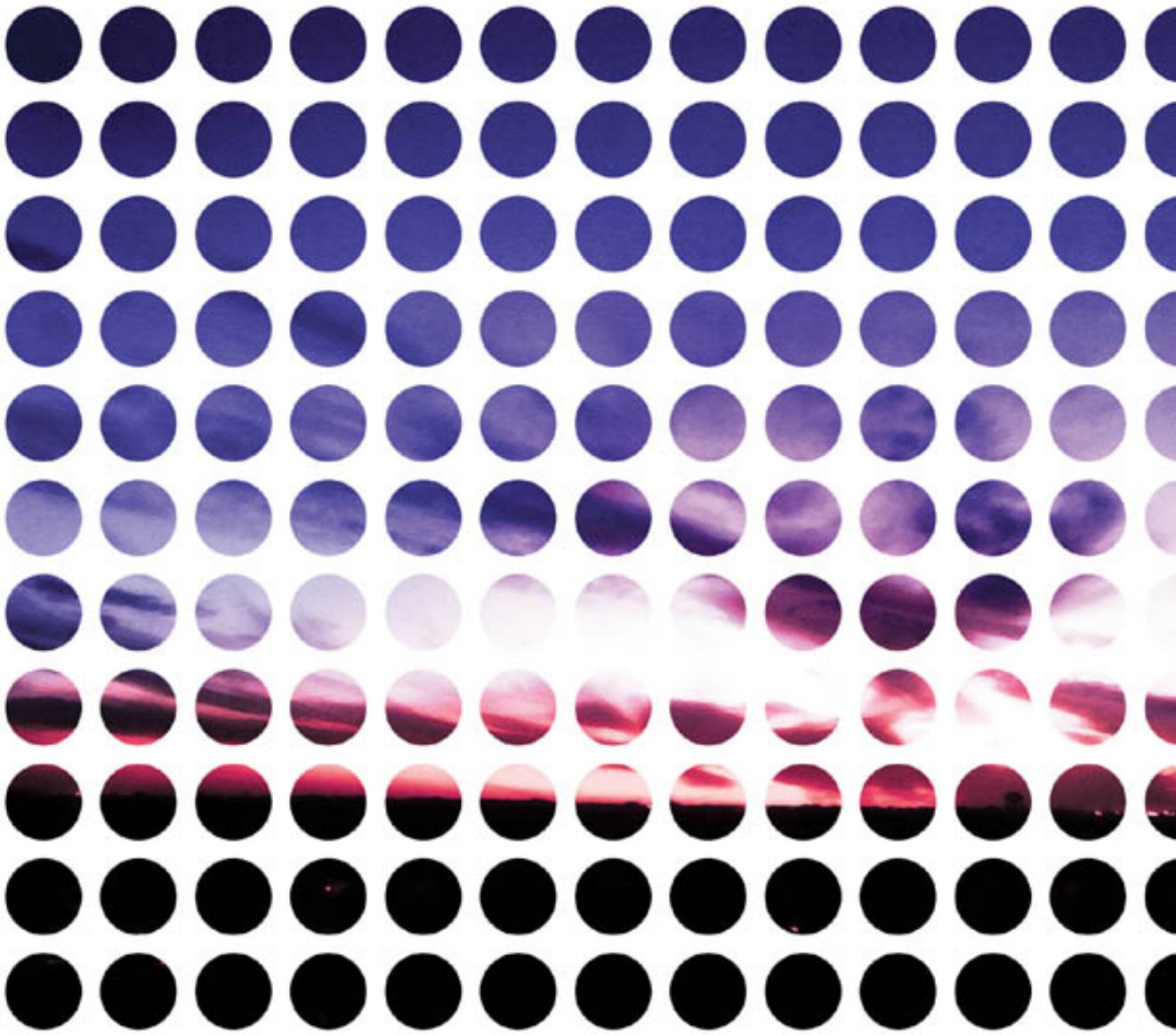

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Induction refers to parents' use of explanation: giving reasons for rules ("If everybody touched the paintings they would soon be very dirty from fingerprints") and appealing to children's desires to be grown-up ("Big girls don't take toys away from babies"). "Other-oriented" explanations seem to be especially powerful in promoting empathy ("When you hit people, it hurts them and makes them sad"). Using induction seems to be the most effective way to promote the internalization of rules, so that children regulate their own behavior by the standards they have learned regardless of whether authorities are present and whether immediate consequences are likely. For example, Laible and Thompson (2002) observed mothers with their 30-month-olds in contexts where conflicts were likely to arise, such as a cleanup task and a "frustration task" in which children had only a too-difficult puzzle to play with while their mothers were busy and while other more interesting toys were off-limits. The more mothers used inductive control strategies, like justification ("We can't touch those toys because they might break"), and the less they used more punitive or aggravating control strategies, like threats, teasing, and harsh commands, the more likely their children were to exercise self-control in a resistance to temptation task 6 months later.

Many studies have found that the same parents may use one practice on some occasions and another in other situations, and sometimes parents use multiple practices in the same disciplinary episode (e.g., Hastings & Grusec, 1998; Kuczynski, 1984). But most parents favor using one type of practice more than the others, and when they do, their primary practice is somewhat predictive of certain child outcomes. But, much as we found with rearing practices in infancy, such as breast versus bottle feeding, particular practices may be less important than the overall quality of the parent–child relationship. For toddlers and older children, the meaning that the child attributes to parents' practices is likely to be important and appears to be tied to the emotional climate established by parenting style (e.g., Darling & Steinberg, 1993; Grusec & Goodnow, 1994). In particular, when parents are warm and responsive, their children are more likely to comply with parental demands (e.g., NICHD, 1998).

Parenting style, then, affects how effective a parenting practice will be with a child (Darling & Steinberg, 1993). As it happens, certain practices tend to be combined with certain parenting styles. Authoritative parents, for example, are often characterized by extensive use of induction, regardless of what other practices they might sometimes use. As we have seen, the children of authoritative parents are likely to show higher levels of competence, self-esteem, and self-regulation than children exposed to other parenting styles. But what might happen if parents who show most of the qualities of an authoritative style—especially high responsiveness and high demandingness—were to use primarily power assertion to enforce their demands? In the next section, we will consider how parenting style interacts with practice for different children and in different cultural contexts, focusing on what we are learning about how these factors interact in the early phases of self-development, during the toddler and early preschool years. We will revisit these issues in later chapters when we describe self-regulatory and moral development in older children and adolescents.

Moderators of Parenting and Parenting Effectiveness

Authoritative parents seem to get the best results from their children, but are their behaviors really having any influence? Both developmentalists (e.g., Scarr, 1993) and popular writers (e.g., Harris, 1998) have asked whether we are wrong to assume that correlations between parenting and child outcomes imply that parenting style and practice are actually causing children's behavior. Several other possibilities exist. First, the shared biological inheritance of parents and children might account for both the parental and the child characteristics measured in these studies (Scarr, 1993, 1997). For example, the same genetic endowment that makes parents affectionate and responsive might produce children who are cooperative and good-natured. Second, children's predispositions and temperaments may actually cause parents' behaviors rather than vice versa. For example, perhaps children who are "naturally" sunny and compliant usually elicit authoritative parenting, but hostile, negative children usually elicit more authoritarian or neglectful parenting behaviors.

Overall, although controversy persists on these issues, most researchers and clinicians take a multidimensional approach to the question of direction of effects in children's social development (e.g., Bell & Chapman, 1986; Collins et al., 2000; Kochanska,1995). That means that multiple causes are thought to be interacting, mutually modifying one another. As in Bronfenbrenner's

bioecological model, proximal processes—reciprocal interactions between the child and the people and things that surround the child—as well as distal processes, such as genes and culture, are all playing a role (e.g., Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006; Lerner, Rothbaum, Boulos, & Castellino, 2002). In this section, we will consider two important factors in the multidimensional mix: the child's temperament and the broader cultural environment.

The Child's Temperament, Parenting, and Child Outcomes

Recall that in infancy, both parents and infants contribute to the quality of the caregiving relationship. It is harder for mothers to be sensitive and responsive to a baby with a difficult temperament, for example. But when mothers are highly responsive during infancy, the good fit they create between their caregiving and the baby's needs supports the development of a secure attachment even for babies with difficult temperaments. When mothers are not able to create a good fit, the type of insecure attachment that emerges often seems to be at least partly influenced by the baby's temperament (e.g., Kochanska, 1998).

With toddlers and preschoolers, temperament and other child characteristics continue to contribute to the quality of the parent–child relationship. Children's typical behaviors can affect both parenting style and the particular disciplinary practices that parents are most likely to use.

Bell and Chapman (1986) reviewed 14 studies that demonstrated the influence of children on parents. Many of these studies were at least partly experimental, with adults (usually parents) reacting to, or interacting with, children who were not their own, in situations created by the researchers. The studies examined adults' responses to children's dependence versus independence behaviors, their tendencies to be aggressive or to withdraw, and their responsiveness to adults (e.g., tendencies to smile, chat, imitate, and so on). For example, in one of these studies, Marcus (1975, 1976) showed parents videotapes of a child actor solving a puzzle. The child in the film behaved either dependently (e.g., seeking help, like, "Would this piece go better here or here?") or independently. The adults' reactions were more directive with the dependent than with the independent child. Stevens-Long (1973) examined parents' reactions to unrelated children's aggressive, uncooperative behavior or to anxious, withdrawn behavior. The adults were more likely to command or ignore the more aggressive children, but to verbally help or reward the more depressive children. Bell and Harper (1977) found that adults used more power assertive behaviors with socially unresponsive girls and more inductive behaviors with girls who were highly responsive. All of these studies demonstrate that adults' reactions are moderated by the characteristics or behaviors of the particular child with whom they are interacting.

Studies such as these, along with research on parents with their own children, have begun to paint a picture of a multilayered, complex interactive system between parent and child. The child's characteristics are likely to affect the parent's behavior, and the parent's style and practices affect the child's behavior. But other factors modify parents' and children's effects on each other. The degree to which the child affects the parent's practices and beliefs depends in part on the parent's initial attitudes toward children and child rearing, as well as the parent's emotional state and ability to manage stress. For example, parents who have child-centered rather than adult-centered concerns are able to be more supportive and responsive to their youngsters. Parents' emotional states influence how child centered they are likely to be. Depressive mothers report fewer child-oriented positive emotions and concerns than nondepressive mothers (Dix, Gershoff, Maunier, & Miller, 2004). Similarly, as we saw in the last chapter, parents' own relationship histories and their working models of attachment are likely to influence how they respond to their children and how well they adapt to their children's characteristics.

Children's Differential Susceptibility to Parenting Strategies

One illustration of the interactive complexities we have been describing is that children show **differential susceptibility** to different rearing approaches, depending on their early temperament characteristics (e.g., Belsky, 2006). Several studies now demonstrate that difficult, negatively reactive infants and toddlers are often *more* affected by parenting style—both positive and negative parenting behaviors—than children with easy temperaments (e.g., Bradley & Corwyn, 2008; van Zeijl et al., 2007; see also Kochanska, Aksan, & Joy, 2007). Let's consider the tendency to display aggressive behavior. Children who have difficult temperaments are more likely than children with easy temperaments to show inappropriate levels of aggression with peers and/or adults (Zahn-Waxler, Iannotti, Cummings, & Denham, 1990). But how aggressive they become

is more closely linked to parents' disciplinary and interactive style than it is for children with easy temperaments. For youngsters with difficult temperaments, insensitive, negative parent behaviors (e.g., frowning, criticizing, yelling, being physically intrusive) appear to increase proneness to aggression, whereas sensitive, positive discipline (e.g., being affectionate, praising, using distraction) decreases proneness to aggression. For youngsters with easy temperaments, even those who seem prone to aggression, parenting differences really do not have much effect. That is, aggressive tendencies are not moderated substantially by parenting practices (Bradley & Corwyn, 2008; van Zeijl et al., 2007; see also Rubin, Hastings, Chen, Stewart & McNichol, 1998).

The Cultural Context, Parenting, and Child Outcomes

Just as children's characteristics can affect parenting and outcomes, cultural factors, such as the race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic class of the family, can moderate parenting practices and may even alter their effects. In particular, the constellations of parenting behaviors that "go together" seem to be somewhat different across cultures. For example, European American parents who are warm and responsive also tend to use gentle parenting practices—offering suggestions, making polite requests, distracting a child, using induction, and so on. But Harwood, Schoelmerich, Schulze, and Gonzalez (1999) found another pattern of associations between parents' warmth and parenting practices in Puerto Rican American mothers as they interacted with their 12- to 15-month-olds. They found no differences between the two ethnic groups on maternal warmth: Both European American and Puerto Rican American mothers tended to be affectionate and committed to providing a supportive emotional climate for their toddlers. But the Puerto Rican mothers were more directive and more likely to issue commands than to give children choices or opportunities to express their desires. Consistent with other research on European Americans, the Anglo mothers were more likely to let their toddlers try to do things for themselves and were more likely to make suggestions than to issue commands. These differences in mothers' behavior were consistent with their long-term goals. Puerto Rican mothers were more concerned about "sociocentric" outcomes, focusing more on wanting children to recognize their obligations and their connectedness to others. The Anglo mothers appeared to emphasize "individualization" as a long-term socialization goal, valuing assertiveness and self-reliance. In general researchers have found that in cultures emphasizing interdependence (like Latin American and Asian cultures), parents typically use high levels of control with children and minimize choice, placing a high value on obedience training, apparently because individuals need to learn to subjugate their own needs to the collective good (see Chen & French, 2008; Rudy & Grusec, 2006). Clearly, to the extent that parenting goals differ across cultural groups, parenting practices are likely to differ as well.

As we have noted, disciplinary practices that involve physical punishments have been associated with externalizing, aggressive child outcomes. Actual physical abuse (inflicting bodily injury by beating, kicking, punching, scalding, and so on) is consistently associated with problematic child outcomes, such as emotion dysregulation, attention problems, conduct disorders, and depression (see Baumrind, 1997; Cicchetti & Toth, 2006). But even the use of more normative physical punishments, like hitting, spanking, and paddling, is linked to aggression and other types of misbehavior in children. For example, in a large study of mother–child pairs, Straus and his colleagues (1997) asked mothers how often they had spanked their child in the last week when the children were between ages 6 and 9. The researchers measured children's antisocial behavior then and over the course of the next 2 years. As you can see in Figure 5.1, more frequent spanking at the first assessment predicted increases in the children's antisocial behavior over the next 2 years. This was true regardless of the family's social class, ethnicity, the child's gender, or maternal warmth. (See Gershoff, 2002, for a meta-analytic review of similar research.)

Other researchers have found, however, that the effects of spanking and other normative forms of corporal punishment vary somewhat in different cultures. In European American samples, there is a linear relationship between amount and harshness of physical discipline and children's aggressive behavior. The more severe the punishment, the more aggressive children are likely to be. For African American children, this relationship has been found in some studies (e.g., Aucoin, Frick, & Bodin, 2006), but a number of researchers either have reported no association between harsh punishment and aggressiveness in children (e.g., Baumrind, 1993; Deater-Deckard, Dodge, Bates, & Pettit, 1996), or they have found that harsh punishment is related to less aggressive outcomes (Lansford, Deater-Deckard, Dodge, Bates, & Pettit, 2004). This kind of reversal has been reported for some Mexican American groups as well (Hill, Bush, & Roosa, 2003).

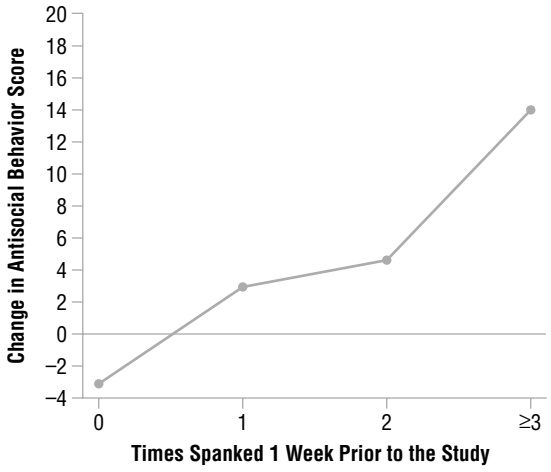

FIGURE 5.1

Change in Antisocial Behavior from 1988 to 1990 for Children Aged 6 to 9 Years as a Function of Spanking

Source: Straus, M., Sugarman, D. B., & Giles-Sims, J. (1997). Spanking by parents and subsequent antisocial behavior of children. *Archives of Pediatric Medicine, 151,* 761–767. Reprinted by permission of the American Medical Association.

What explanations might there be for inconsistency across ethnic groups? One possibility is that the meanings children attach to their parents' discipline make a difference. So, for example, some children might interpret their parents' high levels of control and use of physical discipline as an expression of caring and protectiveness. If harsh discipline is seen by adults and children as acceptable and expected, it may be associated with parental concern and involvement (Holden, 2002). A cross-cultural study by Lansford et al. (2005) clearly supports this view. These investigators collected information on mothers' physical discipline and children's levels of anxiety and aggression in six countries, some where corporal punishment is known to be normative (e.g., Kenya and India) and others where it clearly is not (e.g., Thailand). To assess participants' beliefs about the normativeness of physical discipline, the researchers asked mothers and children how frequently other parents they knew used various types of corporal punishment. Overall, the more physical discipline mothers' used, the more aggressive and anxious the children were, in all countries. However, participants' beliefs about cultural normativeness definitely moderated the effects. In particular, if *children* perceived physical discipline to be acceptable and expected, parents' use of corporal punishment did not seem to affect children's aggressiveness, although it still affected children's anxiety levels, with children being more anxious if their mothers used more physical discipline. It should also be noted, however, that in countries where physical discipline was normative, children's aggressiveness was high relative to countries where physical discipline was nonnormative, regardless of whether children were experiencing much corporal punishment themselves.

Thus, the way that parenting practices affect children may depend in part on whether children see them as connected to parents' positive feelings for, and concerns about, their children (Darling & Steinberg, 1993; Dix, 1991). Indeed, as we noted earlier, in some collectivist cultures, like India, harsher, more dictatorial discipline is typically associated with mothers' *positive* affect and concern, whereas in individualist cultures (e.g., Western Europe) harsh discipline is associated with mothers' *negative* emotions and thoughts about their children (e.g., Rudy & Grusec, 2006). Several large studies of American children also support the idea that parental affection and responsiveness are important in moderating the effects of harsh disciplinary practices (e.g., Aucoin et al., 2006; McLoyd & Smith, 2002). McLoyd and Smith looked at outcomes across a 6-year period in nearly 2,000 American children. For all children, African American, European American, and Hispanic, amount of spanking in the home predicted the level of children's problem behavior over time. (Note that these researchers did not assess anxiety in the children.) But mothers' emotional support of their children moderated this link in all three groups. Thus, physical punishment was clearly a risk factor for children. However, when mothers were warm, positive, and supportive, the risk was reduced. In other words, when physical punishment was part of a more authoritative parenting style, its consequences were moderated by the protective factor

Box 5.2 *Popular Views of Parenting: What Should We Believe?*

Child-rearing "experts" abound in today's society, each touting his or her own set of certainties about how to raise good or happy or successful kids. Popular beliefs about effective parenting have varied from one historical era to another, and, like today, even within each era there has been wide divergence among the kinds of advice that parents could confront. Consider these two wildly different suggestions. The first is from an *Infant Care* bulletin published by the U.S. Department of Labor in 1914, a tract heavily influenced by animal studies of associationism. It seems insensitive to the emotional needs of both the child and the parent, emphasizing routine over all else.

> A properly trained baby is not allowed to learn bad habits. It is a regrettable fact that the few minutes of play that the father has when he gets home at night, which is often almost the only time he has with the child, may result in nervous disturbance of the baby and upset his regular habits . . . much of the play that is indulged in is more or less harmful. (As quoted in Lomax, Kagan, & Rosenkrantz, 1978, p. 130)

In contrast, the second example, from a *Parents Magazine* article in 1950, is based on a misinterpretation of Freudian ideas and seems remarkably overindulgent of children's emotional excesses, with no regard for control. As described in Lomax et al. (1978):

> mothers were told that they must learn to face and accept all types of emotional outbursts on the part of their children, so that the children would not become fearful of their own feelings. . . . "We should feel suspicious of ourselves when we react strongly to something as absurdly simple, for example, as a child calling us names." (p. 66)

Ironically, as Lomax et al. note, Freud actually expected that parents *would* set limits on their children's antisocial behaviors.

Today, some self-styled experts advocate a "return" to authoritarian parenting from earliest childhood, reacting to what they perceive as overly permissive trends (Bolotin, 1999). These "traditionalists" encourage parents not to be child centered. John Rosemond, for example, exhorts parents to make their marriage the focus of attention. Children, he argues, acquire self-esteem from successfully facing hardship and frustration. Give them a lot of responsibility for household chores, and punish all disobedience with unpleasant, memorable consequences. He has expressed disdain for parents who place a high priority on having a "warm and fuzzy" relationship with their children (Rosemond, 1991). Gary and Anne Marie Ezzo, a former pastor and his wife, advocate "biblical principles" for families, among which they include: expecting immediate obedience to first-time directions or commands; feeding babies on a schedule and expecting them to sleep through the night when they are 8 weeks old; potty training by 18 to 24 months, with children accountable for their own cleanup of toilet "accidents" by 30 months; and the use of corporal punishment, starting with hand swatting or squeezing in infancy and moving to spanking with something that creates "a sting" by 18 months (Ezzo & Buckman, 1995, 1999). What is especially notable in the advice of these and other traditionalists is their lack of concern for what researchers describe as the "warmth factor" (see text): parental responsiveness to children's needs, high levels of expressed affection, and willingness to listen and explain. Their emphasis is clearly on the "control factor" alone: take care of the child's need for discipline and all else will follow. They also ignore data indicating that mild power assertion is often more effective than severe forms and that the children of parents who use physical punishment tend to be physically aggressive themselves.

What is a parent to do, and how can a counselor help guide inexperienced or dissatisfied parents as they struggle to sort through the confusing array of advice? The most valuable guidance a counselor can offer is advice informed by research. From research reviewed in this and other chapters on social development, it is clear that parents have an abiding influence on their children's development, although outcomes are the product of many interacting factors, including temperament differences among children and family and cultural context. It is also clear that *both* parental warmth *and* control are important. Awareness of such information can help parents evaluate the suggestions they encounter. For example, is it true, as Rosemond argues, that self-esteem is a product of accomplishments that include overcoming hardship? It sounds sensible, but the data indicate that the picture is much more complex. Parents' responsiveness and sensitivity to children's individual and developmental needs are core elements of successful parenting. Making children do things that are too difficult for them is insensitive—in such a case, hardship seems unlikely to lead to anything but frustration and a sense of defeat or abandonment for the child. Rigid age formulas are therefore a risky business. For example, many 2-year-olds may be ready to potty train quickly, but some are not. Many 8-week-olds probably cannot sleep through the night, because they get too hungry or because their neurological systems are too immature to maintain such a routine.

But when parental demands are embedded in a context of warmth, so that they are appropriately keyed to the child's emerging skills, and when children feel safe expressing their own feelings and concerns, high levels of demandingness do indeed seem to be associated with feelings of competence and self-confidence. Authoritative, not authoritarian, parenting has the best track record.

of parental warmth. But as part of an authoritarian style (low warmth, high control), physical punishment was a strong predictor of conduct problems (see also Baumrind, 1997). It may be that when we find racial or cultural groups in which harsh discipline is not consistently associated with negative outcomes, it is because physical punishment is more often used by parents who show high levels of warmth and positive regard for their children. Under such circumstances, the negative impact of such discipline appears to be reduced.

Two points are important to keep in mind. First, parents who physically punish their children "may be conveying the message that the use of force is a justifiable way in which to solve conflicts" (Bugental & Grusec, 2006, p. 402). The finding by Lansford et al. (2005) that in countries where corporal punishment is expected and accepted, children tend to score high on measures of aggression (even when they themselves have not experienced corporal punishment), suggests that typical strategies for child rearing may be read by children as indicators of acceptable behavior in other contexts. Second, power assertion of any type is usually effective for short-term control of children's behavior, but appears to have little influence on the goals that parents want most to achieve with discipline—the development of self-regulation and morality. Considering these two facts, parents may be well advised to minimize the use of corporal punishment (see Box 5.2).

CONSCIENCE: THE BEGINNINGS OF A MORAL SELF

You can see that research on parenting supports the many theories of self-development that emphasize the importance of social interactive experiences in the development of the self-system. Parenting style especially has been found to correlate with children's self-esteem—how worthy and competent children feel—and it appears to be linked to self-confidence in social interaction. Children whose parents are child centered, responsive, and warm tend to show high levels of self-esteem, and they are likely to be skillful in social interaction, as evidenced by peer acceptance and teacher ratings of social competence. These findings suggest that Erikson (1950/1963) may have been on the right track when he argued that after initial feelings of worth are laid down in late infancy, these feelings will be reworked by the child as she changes. For example, as toddlers become more capable of self-sufficiency, they acquire needs, such as autonomy and control needs, that sensitive, responsive caregivers accommodate. If a toddler's needs are met in a positive, affirming way, the child will go beyond having global feelings of worth and will acquire more differentiated feelings of competency.

Barbara Schwartz/Merrill

Social interactive experiences contribute to children's developing self-systems.