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## **PRESS RELEASE**

Child Development (September/October 2005)

**EMBARGOED FOR RELEASE ON SEPTEMBER 14, 2005 (12:01 AM)**

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### **Warm, Nurturing Parents Have Well-Adjusted Adolescents**

Although preadolescents and adolescents might think their parents hold no sway over them, a study published in the September/October issue of the journal *Child Development* finds just the opposite – early parenting style makes a big difference in how a child turns out.

Researchers from Arizona State University in Tempe evaluated 186 adolescents three times over a six-year period, once every two years from the time the children were about 9 to about age 13. They used parent and teacher reports to evaluate how well adjusted the children were in terms of aggression, antisocial and delinquent behavior, and how well the children were able to “self-regulate,” i.e., inhibit their behavior when necessary and control their emotions and behavior.

The researchers assessed the children’s self-regulation by measuring their persistence in completing a frustrating task (rather than cheating or giving up), along with reports from parents and teachers. Additionally, they observed the parents’ (mostly mothers’) warmth and positive emotions as they interacted with their child during each of the three assessments.

The researchers found that parenting, youths’ self-regulation, and youths’ adjustment were generally related to each other within and across time. Additionally, they found evidence that parents who interacted warmly and positively with their children at the youngest age (the first assessment) had children who were relatively self-regulated two years later, and, in turn, exhibited fewer problem behaviors at the final assessment.

“Our results are consistent with the view that parenting affects children’s self-regulation and their overall adjustment,” said study author Nancy Eisenberg, Ph.D., Regents’ professor of psychology at Arizona State University in Tempe.

“Thus, the quality of parent-child interactions in childhood seems to foreshadow whether young adolescents experience behavioral problems in adolescence, and this relation appears to be at least partly due to the fact that warm, positive parents have children who are well regulated,” she said.

“Because warm parenting seems to foster children’s self-regulation, it is likely to contribute to youths’ positive functioning in a variety of areas.”

Summarized from *Child Development*, Vol. 76, Issue 5, *Relations among Positive Parenting, Children’s Effortful Control, and Externalizing Problems: A Three-Wave Longitudinal Study* by Eisenberg N, Zhou Q, Spinrad TL, Valiente C, Fabes RA, and Liew J (Arizona State University). Copyright 2005 The Society for Research in Child Development, Inc. All rights reserved.