

CHILD DEVELOPMENT LEADING TO THE PURSUIT OF VIRTUES AND THE AVOIDANCE OF VICES

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Abstract

Optimizing the social, emotional, moral and cognitive development of children will support prosocial behavior and peaceful societies. To accomplish these goals, efforts need to start from birth with authoritative parenting to achieve secure attuned attachment between caregiver and child. Such parenting should eliminate the toxic stress associated with the authoritarian approach and the lack of direction seen with permissive or uninvolved parenting. Early literacy is the key to building character using the vehicles of modeled behaviors, reading stories with a moral and that teach a lesson and Human Relations Programs for Children. Benevolent mindfulness characterized by emotional empathy, compassion and helping behaviors will result from proper parenting and successful character education. The resultant ability to think in a complex fashion where virtues are pursued and vices avoided should facilitate resistance to false narratives and non-violent conflict resolution. Avoiding Adverse Child Experiences has been shown to minimize depression, violence perpetration and other problem behaviors and disorders. When there are educational and professional resources in play to support the development of children in communities, a responsible, caring citizenry can be anticipated.

Optimizing social, emotional, moral and cognitive development for all children is a goal towards which most individuals would agree is worth striving. Such an achievement would likely solve many problems that humankind confronts on a global basis. Examples of these problems include domestic abuse, avoidable enmities, some mental illnesses, crimes, wars, genocide and others. Attaining benevolent mindfulness is a key result of any process leading to mature, healthy character development. At the same time, avoidance of insults that lead to selfish, malevolent behaviors is critical if human potential is to be optimized. This paper is meant to provide a "roadmap" to the process of fostering child development, so that virtuous helping behaviors are the rule and vices actively avoided. The Flow Chart on Benevolent Mindfulness provides an outline of the necessary stations along the road, while the Flow Chart on Malevolent Mindfulness indicates the pitfalls that need to be avoided.

Imprinting describes a situation where a young animal comes to recognize another animal, person, or thing as a parent or other object of habitual trust, often shortly after birth. In humans, we usually use the term attachment to describe the trusting relationship that develops between child and caregiver. This trusting relationship strengthens over a period of months to years due to ongoing interpersonal attunement with caregivers being responsive to the child's needs. In order for attachment to be successful an initial bonding of love and tenderness the caregiver feels for the infant needs to occur. As Andrea Hollingsworth has stated, "Over time, secure attuned attachments with other persons may enable us to love more and fear less, rendering us progressively more capable of sharing in the suffering of others and increasing the likelihood that we will take action to alleviate their misery." It is these secure attachments that allow caregivers, teachers and mentors to influence the child's developing mindfulness or intrapersonal attunement.

Keywords: Parenting; emotional empathy; modeling caring behaviors; moral development;

Biography

Dr, Katzman served his pediatric residency at the University of Chicago and Children's Hospital of Michigan. After spending two years in the Navy, he entered a fellowship in Neonatal-Perinatal Medicine at Temple University Hospital. He is board certified in Pediatrics and Neonatal-Perinatal Medicine. He is also certified by the American College of Physician Executives as a Physician Executive. Over the years, he has published a number of papers in both Neonatology and Pediatrics, an initial interest in Human Relations Programs for Children in the 1980s evolved into an effort to understand the ways children are taught to hate and how such indoctrinations can be prevented. The papers that he has published on this subject include:

- 1) A Bioethical Analysis of a Form of Psychologic Abuse: Teaching Hatred to Children. *Clinical Pediatrics*.2005;44:143-150
 - 2) Neurological and Psychological Mechanisms Explaining How Hatred is Programmed Into the Minds of Children. *The Open Pediatric Medicine Journal*. 2009; 3:58-60
 - 3) Spartan and Sambian Societies: Psychosocial Development Stifling Emotional Empathy and Supporting Violent Behaviors. *The Open Pediatric Medical Journal*. 2014; 8:1-8
 - 4) Genocide: Plotting a Course to Never Again. *Neuropsychiatry(London)*2016;6(4):190-192
 - 5) Convention on the Rights of the Child: academic exercise or prescription for a better life. *Advances in Pediatric Research*.5:10 doi 10.24106/apr.2018.5.10
 - 6) Understanding the Paths to Malevolence and Benevolence: A Case Study with Corroborating Evidence. *Journal of Behavioral Neuroscience*. 2018;2[1] 7-10.
 - 7) The Global Child Development Corps. *Advances in Pediatric Research*. 6:30 doi: b10.35248/2385-4529.19.6.30
 - 8) Child Development Leading to the Pursuit of Virtues and the Avoidance of Vices. *Journal of Advances in Medicine and Medical Research*.2020;32(10) 22-29
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