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ABSTRACT

This paper reviews research on the assessment of parental empathy and considers data relevant to the relationship of parental empathy to other parental and family attributes. Three studies that relate parental empathy to the child's adjustment and personality characteristics, including empathy in the child, are then examined. The first study focuses on parent and child correlates of parental empathy with elementary-aged children. The second study concerns the same relationships in younger samples, and the third examines the relationships of maternal behavior and empathy to preschool children's empathy. These studies have yielded findings consistent with the descriptive model that places parental empathy in the context of a matrix of parental child rearing attitudes and behaviors that have a significant influence on the child's adjustment, affective dispositions, and cognitive functioning. The data from these studies indicate that the effects of parental empathy are largely restricted to the effects of maternal empathy on daughters. A new model of empathy and its role in family dynamics is presented, and implications of the findings for training components of the Head Start Program are discussed. Appended are 23 references and related materials. (GLR)

Studies on Parental Empathy:

Implications for Head Start

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Paper presented at the National Working Conference, New Directions in Child and Family Research: Shaping Head Start in the Nineties, Washington, D.C., June 24-26, 1991.

Abstract

Studies addressed to the assessment of parental empathy are reviewed, and data relevant to the relationship of parental empathy with other parental and family attributes are considered. Research relating parental empathy to personality characteristics and adjustment of the child, including empathy, are then examined. The first study focuses on parent and child correlates of mother/father empathy with elementary aged children. A second study focuses on these relationships with younger samples in abusive and clinic families. A third study also focuses on the interrelationships of parental empathy, parental socialization attitudes and behavior in preschool children. A model of empathy and its role in family dynamics is presented. Implications of the findings for training components of the Head Start Program are discussed.

Studies on Parental Empathy: Implications for Head Start

Twenty-five years ago the concept of empathy was rarely alluded to, whether in the context of psychological writing or in the popular media. Today, empathy is a salient topic of academic inquiry. It has also become a term that has found its way into everyday parlance. In its more popular usage, empathy connotes a positive attitude toward others, a receptivity to and understanding of others, and compassion and caring. The more technical, scientific usage of empathy, while more restricted in meaning, is not very different. Both scientists and lay persons view empathy as a desirable characteristic that enhances social interaction and reduces social disharmony. Empathy is an attribute that we seek in psychotherapists, in friends, in political leaders, in teachers, and, from my perspective, it is a critical attribute in the parenting process. The studies that will be reviewed are addressed to the role of empathy in parenting.

The presence of parent involvement as a major component of contemporary education in general, and of Head Start in particular, is an acknowledgment of the significant role that parents play in childhood education as well as child development. Family context, parent behavior, parent values, and attitudes influence the cognitive capabilities and achievements of children along with the child's social and

emotional development (Maccoby & Martin, 1983). Parent attributes that are germane to the child's cognitive development are not restricted to parental cognitive stimulation and related cognitively oriented behaviors. Emotional transactions between parent and child are also implicated in the child's cognitive development as well as affective development. A central thesis of this paper is that parental empathy, which entails cognitive and affective features, plays a prominent role in the matrix of antecedents and consequences that characterize the parent-child interaction.

Empathy is admittedly an elusive construct. Definitions of empathy and its operational assessment vary. My own research on empathy has been guided by a model of empathy that includes both cognitive and emotional elements. Empathy, according to this model, is a shared affective experience, an affective correspondence between the emotional experience of an observer and an observed that includes three components: 1) the cognitive ability to discriminate affective cues in others, 2) the more mature cognitive skills entailed in assuming the perspective and role of another person, and 3) emotional responsiveness; that is, the affective ability to experience emotions (Feshbach, 1973, 1975, 1978). Thus, for example, if a parent experiences some degree of sadness when observing sadness in a child, the

parent's reaction would be considered empathic, assuming that the parents' emotional response was based on discrimination and understanding of the child's perspective. Emotional sharing without these cognitive mediators is not "true" empathy and may simply be a form of emotional contagion.

Implicit in this and other models of empathy is the critical requirement of differentiation of self from other. A seemingly shared emotional response can come about because of poor self-boundaries, a lack of differentiation between self and other or emotional contagion rather than through empathy as designated in the three component model. This is especially important for parental empathy since some parents in their relationship with each other and with their children may be so strongly identified that they are unable to distinguish between their feelings and those of the other person.

These caveats have important implications for the functional properties of empathy. According to my theoretical model, an empathic parent should be more understanding of a child's perspective and feelings than the parent low in empathy and be less punitive because hurts inflicted on one's child will be vicariously experienced by the parent. However, excessive parental empathy can be damaging if it blocks the parent from appropriate child-training behavior, if it fosters intrusiveness, and if it is

self-centered rather than child-centered. Thus, according to the model of empathy that has guided our research program, the affective response of the parent to the child's emotional experience can have divergent consequences for the child's development. If the parent's emotional reaction is exaggerated, if it arises out of diffuse boundaries between parent and child, the child's socio-emotional development will be impeded. However, if the affective response is modulated, it has a positive impact for both parent and child. For the parent, it amplifies and strengthens the cognitive understanding that gave rise to the shared affective response. For the child, it serves as a cue that the parent comprehends and shares the child's experience. In addition to facilitating understanding of the child and sensitivity to the child's feelings, parental empathy can influence the child's development of self through validation and reinforcement of the child's experiences.

Overall, empathy should function as a positive influence in the socialization process and should facilitate the child's development of adaptive behaviors. Parental empathy, moreover, does not function in isolation from other parental attributes. As I have proposed elsewhere (Feshbach, 1987), parental empathy should be associated with parental warmth, sensitivity, low punitiveness, and positive involvement with the child. It is difficult to conceive of an empathic parent

who is not warm and not sensitive. One would also anticipate a mutually facilitating relationship between parental empathy and the attachment relationship. Parental empathic reactions to the child's feelings are likely to enhance the child's attachment and, in turn, parents are more likely to be empathic with children with whom they share an attachment bond. Consequently, while the research that I will present is primarily addressed to the effects of parental empathy, it must be recognized that empathy is an integral part of a constellation of socialization factors.

In terms of our model of empathy, parental empathy should be positively correlated with such psychological attributes as parental warmth, acceptance, and involvement, and negatively correlated with the use of such socialization techniques as repressiveness, inhibition of affective expression, and punitiveness. A descriptive model articulating the interrelationship of empathy with other parental attributes and with child behaviors is depicted in Figure 1. The research findings to be reviewed here bear

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Insert Figure 1 about here

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upon various facets of this model. At a statistical level, the effects of parental empathy can be separated from the effect of these other correlated factors. However, at a

psychological level, parental empathy is inextricably interwoven with these other parental attributes.

The research strategy that I have followed in my investigation of parental empathy has had two major directions. One direction has been the study of the relationship of parental empathy to parental personality and socialization attributes to which parental empathy should be theoretically linked. The second has been an examination of child attributes and behaviors that theoretically should be influenced by the degree of parental empathy. In addition, in some studies, we have also examined the relationship between child attributes and parental attributes that are empirically or theoretically linked to parental empathy, constituting a closely related third direction in our research program.

The first investigation that I might cite bearing on these issues was published in 1975 (Feshbach, 1975), a period in which I was investigating the antecedents and properties of empathy in children and had not yet begun to address the properties of empathy in parents. In this study, with six- to eight-year-old boys and girls, we used the Feshbach and Roe Situational Test of Empathy (FASTE). This measure entails the use of slide sequences depicting children in different affective situations, including happy, sad, fearful, and anger eliciting events (Feshbach & Roe, 1968).

To assess parental socialization attitudes, we administered the Block Child Rearing Q-sort to the parents of the children (Block, 1969). Significant relationships between the parent dimensions derived from the Block and degree of empathy were found primarily between mothers and daughters. Maternal punishment, maternal aggressiveness and conflict with the child were inversely correlated with daughter's empathy scores while maternal tolerance and non-restrictive attitudes and permissiveness were positively correlated with empathy in daughters. This pattern of stronger correlates of maternal than paternal attributes and more significant effects for girls than for boys is present in the results of a number of the studies of parental empathy and of related parental attributes that I have carried out. The importance of sex differences is reflected in related studies carried out by other investigators. Fabes, Miller, and Eisenberg (1990), in a study of second and fifth graders and their mothers, found that mothers who were more sympathetic and better perspective takers had daughters who reported feeling more sympathetic and less happy after exposure to needy others. Sex differences are also reported by Siegal (1985) in an investigation of the relation of empathy to parental identification. Sex differences are important to explore in any developmental investigation. This has especially proved to be the case for child empathy and parent empathy.

In embarking upon the investigation of parent empathy, we found that while there were several extant measures assessing empathy in adults, none were specially addressed to empathy in a family context. To aid us in the study of parental empathy, a self-report instrument based upon the three component model of empathy was developed. Also included were items relating to spouses or partners as well as children.

A factor analysis of these items yielded four factors (Feshbach, 1987). The first factor was readily labeled as a Cognitive dimension and included such items as, "I can guess what my child would like for a present"; "I find it hard to read the expression of my partner's/spouse's face." The second factor was labeled General Empathy. Items with high loadings on this factor were: "It hurts me when my child gets a shot from a doctor"; "When my partner/spouse gets depressed, I feel down too"; "I became very involved when I watch a movie." All of the items on the third factor involved the partner/spouse and the factor was labeled Partner/Spousal Empathy. Sample items are: "My partner/spouse says that I am not sensitive to his/her feelings"; "I feel happy when something good happens to my partner/spouse." The fourth factor was labeled Affective Expression and included such items as: "I do not like to burden my partner/spouse with my feelings"; "I do not like my

child to hug and kiss in public." The studies to be reviewed, relating parental empathy to other parental attributes and to child dispositions and behaviors bear on the construct validity of the Parent/Partner Empathy Scale. It is of note that two measures of adult affective dispositions administered along with the Parent Empathy items, the Hogan Empathy Scale (1969), and a measure of attributes towards one's spouse were both significantly correlated in the hypothesized direction with the Parent Empathy Scale.

The first study employing the Parent/Partner Measure of Empathy compared attributes and behaviors of preschoolers and their mothers who constituted three groups: Physical Abusive Families, Clinic Families, and Control Families (Feshbach & Howes, under review). The Abuse Parent Group manifested significantly lower scores than both the Control and Clinic parents on the Cognitive and Partner Empathy factors, and lower scores than the Controls on the General Empathy Factor. Of note, the abusive mothers had significantly higher scores than the Controls on the fourth factor, Affective Expression.

Correlations of the empathy factors with mother/child observations yielded significant positive correlations of the General, Partner, and Cognitive Empathy factors with such features of maternal behavior as amount of positive affect displayed and degree of maternal involvement in the child's

behavior, and negative correlations with the amount of negative affect displayed (Table 1). Further, maternal

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Insert Table 1 about here

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empathy also related systematically to child behaviors in the interaction situation. One or more of the first three factors correlated positively with child compliance, child self-control, and child positive affect and inversely with negative affect displayed by the child. Yet, the fourth factor, Affective Expression, correlated inversely with child compliance, self-control, and child positive affect, and directly with child negative affect. Thus, the Affective Expression factor, that was strongest for the mothers who abuse their children, appears to have dysfunctional consequences despite its positive relationship to the three other empathy factors. In contrast, the latter reflect positive relationships with indices of effective functioning in parents and in children. The data suggest that while parental empathy has positive socializing implications, the Affective Expression component, untempered by the other empathy components, may have negative consequences for the child's adjustment. Studies of the intensity of maternal affective expression and children's responses to distressed peers reflect complex relationships between maternal

affective intensity and the child's reaction to distress in others, the relationship depending upon other maternal attributes (Miller, Eisenberg, Fabes, Shell, & Gular, 1989).

The positive implications of parental empathy for other features of the socialization process and for the child's development are reflected in several subsequent studies that we carried out. One of these investigations (Feshbach & Feshbach, 1987) involved a group of elementary children, ranging in age from nine to eleven, and their parents, two thirds of whom were mothers and one-third, fathers. Parents completed the parental empathy measure plus the following instruments: the Moos Measure of Family Cohesion and Family Conflict (1981), the Feshbach Parent Stress Index (1985), the Block Child Rearing Q-sort (1969), and the Achenbach and Edelbrock (1981) measure of child psychopathology. The children were administered the Feshbach Audio-Visual Empathy Measure (1980), the Bryant Self-Report Empathy Scale (1982), and also completed questionnaire measures of aggressive and depressive tendencies. In addition, teacher ratings of depression and aggression for each child were available.

Turning first to the relationship of the Parental Empathy measure to indices of family atmosphere, maternal empathy scores were positively related to Family Cohesion and inversely related to Family Conflict and to Maternal Stress (Table 2). For fathers, the correlation between Paternal

Insert Table 2 about here

Empathy and Family Cohesion approached significance while negligible correlations were obtained for the other family and stress measures. In analyzing the relationship between Empathy and the Block Child-Rearing measure, fathers again displayed fewer significant correlates of empathy than did mothers (Table 3). For fathers, total empathy scores were uncorrelated with any of the child rearing dimensions

Insert Table 3 about here

assessed by the Block. However, the Cognitive and Affective Expression factors for fathers were inversely correlated with the Block Child-Rearing dimensions of Over-Protection, Inhibition of Emotions, and Punitiveness.

For mothers, empathy proved to be a rather pervasive attribute, manifesting significant relationships with almost all of the Block Child-Rearing dimensions assessed. Total empathy scores and most of the individual empathy factor scores were positively correlated with the degree of Autonomy and Affection reported by the mother in her child rearing attitudes and behaviors and inversely correlated with degree of Hostility/Anger and Punitiveness, with Inhibition of the

child's emotions and with degree of Disagreement with the child.

Given the network of child-rearing dimensions linked to maternal empathy, it is not surprising to find significant relationships between maternal empathy and the child's behavior and adjustment. In the prior study comparing abusing with non-abusing mothers, higher empathy scores were obtained by the non-abusing mothers and maternal empathy was significantly related to positive, adaptive behaviors displayed by the child in interactions with the mother. This study examined the relationship of maternal empathy to more general, dispositional indices of the child's adjustment and personality. The results indicate Maternal Empathy to be inversely correlated with both the Internalizing (r=-.37) and Externalizing (r=-.42) symptom scores on the Achenbach psychopathology measure, with paternal empathy being inversely correlated with Externalizing symptoms (r=-.41). These findings tend to hold for both boys and girls, with low empathy in mothers and also in fathers being predictive of externalizing symptoms such as aggression and hyperactivity, and low empathy in mothers being predictive of internalizing symptoms such as depression and anxiety.

Inferences from these correlations are constrained by the fact that both the empathy scores and the Achenbach scores are derived from parental reports. However, measures

based on the child's behavior and on teacher reports were also found to be significantly related to parental empathy, especially maternal empathy. Children of more empathic mothers obtained higher empathy scores on the Feshbach Audio-Visual measure and on the Bryant Self-Report Questionnaire than children of less empathic mothers. The Partner Empathy factor--that is, the degree of empathy of the mother toward her spouse or partner--was particularly linked to the child's empathy ($r=.42$). From a methodological standpoint, the correlation between maternal empathy, a self-report inventory, and the Feshbach Child Audiovisual measure is noteworthy in view of the very different methods used to assess parental empathy and child empathy.

When separate analyses are carried out for boys and girls, mother's empathy was predictive of daughter's empathy but was unrelated to the son's empathy. While fathers' empathy was more highly correlated with son's empathy, the findings were marginal. The findings bearing on parental influences on children's empathy are of particular interest in view of the correlates of empathy in children with social behavior and cognitive functioning. Empathy in children has been shown to be inversely correlated with aggression and positively correlated with prosocial behaviors (Feshbach, 1989). In addition, empathy at ages eight through nine has

been found to be predictive of achievement at ages ten and eleven (Feshbach & Feshbach, 1987).

The stronger relationship of maternal than paternal empathy to the child's empathic tendencies was also reflected in the parental correlates of the child's aggressive tendencies. Daughters of empathic mothers tended to manifest significantly less aggression as assessed by self-report ($r=-.41$) and by teacher rating ($r=-.34$). Again, when the sample was divided by sex, these inverse relationships tended to hold only for daughters. Father's empathy was unrelated to son's or daughter's aggression. A similar but more marginal pattern of relationships was obtained between parental empathy and indices of the child's depressive tendencies, with correlations with maternal empathy being consistently in the negative direction and approaching statistical significance. Despite the correlations between maternal empathy and the child's empathic and aggressive and, to a lesser extent, depressive tendencies, no significant relationships were obtained between daughter's and son's self-concept and either maternal or paternal empathy. Given the model of parental empathy as one facet of a cluster of child development enhancing parental attributes and practices, we would expect self-concept to be positively related to parental empathy. The absence of a relationship in this instance is, in our judgment, a function of the

limitations of the measures we used to assess self-concept in this age group.

In addition to the assessment of the child's affective dispositions, the children were also administered the Wide-Range Achievement Test (WRAT) (Jastak & Jastak, 1978). Maternal empathy was positively related to the child's achievement. The Wide Range Achievement Test yields scores for Reading, Spelling and Arithmetic Achievement. The correlations between Maternal Empathy and daughter's achievement scores were significant for Reading and Spelling, being .48 for Reading and .52 for Spelling. These relationships were particularly pronounced for the Cognitive empathy factor, and again primarily for daughters. Whereas the Partner Empathy component for mothers was most strongly related to indices of the daughter's affective functioning, the Cognitive Empathy component was most strongly correlated to the child's cognitive performance.

The systematic relationships found between maternal empathy, child-rearing practices, and the child's affective and cognitive functioning are reflected in other contextual relationships bearing on the home environment and its effects on the child. Thus, mothers in this sample who were employed part-time proved to be more empathic than non-working or full-time working mothers, while the children of these part-time working mothers obtained higher empathy scores than the

children of either non-working or full-time working mothers (Tangney & Feshbach, 1987).

The final study to be reviewed involved a sample of 92 mothers and their four-year old pre-school offspring (Feshbach, Sockloskie, & Rose, in preparation). In addition to completing the Parental/Partner Empathy Scale, the mothers were given a shortened form of the Block Child-Rearing Q-Sort. The children were administered the Feshbach and Roe Situational Test of Empathy (Feshbach & Roe, 1968).

Mother's empathy was again significantly correlated with the child's empathy, the relationship being significant for daughters (r=.32) and just falling short of statistical significance for sons (r=.22). These findings are consistent with the results of the study of early elementary age children in which the index of children's empathy was the Feshbach Audio-Visual Measure. The positive relationship between mother-daughter empathy transcends age and type of instrument used to assess the child's empathy. Maternal empathy was also related to the child-training of daughters, being positively correlated with nurturance (r=-.29) and other indicators of child acceptance and support (r=.51) and negatively correlated with punitive (r=.35) and repressive (r=.32) approaches to training the child. Also, maternal punishment, like maternal empathy, is inversely related to daughter's empathy scores (r=-.39), a finding similar to that

obtained in the earlier study of the socialization antecedents of children's empathy that initiated this research program on parental empathy.

The series of studies that I have reviewed here have yielded findings consistent with the descriptive model that places parental empathy in a context of a matrix of parental child-rearing attitudes and behaviors that have a significant influence on the child's adjustment, affective dispositions and cognitive functioning. The research supports the thesis that the functions of parental empathy have to be understood and examined in terms of an interlocking constellation of parental relationships and child-rearing values and behaviors. At the same time, the data indicate that the effects of parental empathy are largely restricted to maternal empathy and to daughters. Whether those results reflect a greater influence of mothers than fathers on children's development, whether they are restricted to the particular developmental variables assessed, whether methodological factors are contributing to the fewer correlations obtained for father's empathy are questions that remain to be addressed by future research. In terms of our model of empathy, empathy should be a significant personality dimension for fathers as well as mothers.

Additional research is needed to explore more deeply the meaning and functions of empathy in the child training

process, especially for fathers and sons. Nevertheless, there are sufficient data and consistent findings that enable us to make inferences and recommendations regarding programs for parents, teachers and children in educational contexts. In view of the close relationship between the child's social, affective and cognitive functioning in the preschool years, and the mediating influence of parental empathy, the implications of empathic parenting is of special significance for the preschool period.

The parent component of the Head Start Programs can provide a ready opportunity for the incorporation of suggestions from the findings of these studies. Parents can be apprised of the importance of an empathic orientation that entails sensitivity to the child's feelings, openness to the child's point of view, and awareness of the child's framework and perspective. The history of psychotherapeutic and educational practice tells us that simply providing information does not necessarily lead to behavioral change. A program should be devised that will help parents develop and refine the skills of affective discrimination, perspective and role taking, and controlled emotional responding that are entailed in empathic parenting. We are confident that such a program can be readily developed and implemented. This confident expectation is based on the success of other parent programs in contributing to the

overall goals of Head Start. It is also based on our experience in devising and implementing Empathy Training Programs for children in the upper elementary grades (Feshbach, Feshbach, Fauvre, & Campbell, 1984). Our program, based on the three component model of empathy, has been demonstrated to be effective in fostering empathy, in regulating aggression, in promoting prosocial behaviors and in enhancing self-esteem. While adults function at a different level than children, empathy training exercises that are age and role appropriate can be readily formulated.

One of the advantages of introducing Empathy Training into the parent involvement aspect of the Head Start Program, is the potential for heightening the consciousness of Head Start staff regarding the desirability and utility of an empathic orientation. In addition, I would like to recommend that an Empathy Component be directly incorporated into pre-service and inservice training programs for Head Start Staff. Pre-school teachers and child care staff function as parent surrogates. Consequently, many of the generalizations regarding the implications of parental empathy would appear to be applicable to the effects of an empathic orientation in early childhood educators.

At this point, it is important to recognize that an empathic orientation does not imply excessive parental permissiveness or lack of discipline. Rather, it implies

greater parental understanding of the child's feelings and more effective communication of that understanding to the child. These empathic skills can then be utilized in the service of more appropriate parental discipline strategies.

In reviewing the potentialities of Empathy Training for parents and teachers, little has been said regarding the feasibility and advantages of empathy training for the young children in early childhood arrangements, especially Head Start programs. Children, exposed to parents, teachers, and staff who have developed an empathic orientation, will very likely imitate these adult models. Thus, children may indirectly learn skills related to empathy. With regard to more directed learning, there are a number of compelling reasons to implement the training of skills that are related to empathy, or skills related to the precursors of empathy. Firstly, Head Start populations include many children who come from fragmented families, where the incidence of child abuse is not infrequent. These are circumstances that lead to considerable distortions in children's interpersonal perceptions. Empathy training has the potential for clarifying these perceptions and even to help modulate the emotional reactivity of the youngster.

Another postitive effect that may accrue from empathy training is the possible resolution of the controversy surrounding the issue of whether attending child care at an

early age predisposes a child to become aggressive. Since there is considerable evidence attesting to the inverse relationship between empathy and aggression, and since empathy training helps reduce aggressiveness, the implementation of empathy training could conceivably modulate any aggression enhancing effect of preschool stimulation. I would like to recommend that empathy training at the preschool level should be systematically developed, implemented and evaluated. One of the desirable features of this type of program is that strategies involving affective discrimination, perspective taking and role taking can easily be included in everyday preschool curriculum activities. The implementation of Empathy Training Programs for parents and teachers will require more extensive effort and participation. The implementation and evaluation of this three-pronged thrust addressed to parents, to teachers and staff, and to young children, should contribute to both the effectiveness of Head Start Programming and to our basic knowledge regarding empathic processes and their role in child development and education.

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Table 1

Mother and Child Behaviors

	Abuse Sample Mother Behaviors			
	Investment	Involvement	Positive affect	Negative affect
Empathy				
general	.44 (.51)	.03 (.18)	.42 (.32)	-.08 (-.15)
spousal	.18 (.32)	.03 (.05)	.39 (.41)	-.16 (-.11)
cognitive	.33 (.29)	.28 (.33)	.63 (.65)	-.11 (-.06)
affective	.05 (.01)	.37 (.30)	.10 (.05)	.29 (.38)

	Abuse Sample Child Behaviors			
	Compliance	Self Control	Positive affect	Negative affect
Empathy				
general	.28 (.19)	.43 (.27)	.42 (.58)	-.13 (1.12)
spousal	.02 (.04)	-.28 (-.27)	.28 (.15)	-.18 (-.14)
cognitive	.12 (.42)	.18 (.39)	.28 (.50)	-.03 (-.03)
affective	-.25 (-.28)	-.43 (-.24)	-.08 (-.30)	.45 (.42)
Stress	-.08 (-.27)	-.28 (-.24)	-.17 (-.18)	.01 (.06)

(table continues)

(Table 1 continued)

	Clinic Sample Mother Behaviors			
	Investment	Involvement	Positive affect	Negative affect
Empathy				
general	.20 (.14)	.10 (.01)	.23 (.23)	-.32 (-.43)
spousal	.41 (.58)	.14 (.15)	.18 (.02)	-.13 (-.30)
cognitive	.08 (.06)	.20 (.45)	.08 (.12)	-.28 (-.47)
affective	.03 (.07)	.24 (.34)	-.15 (-.24)	.12 (.17)

	Clinic Sample Child Behaviors			
	Compliance	Self Control	Positive affect	Negative affect
Empathy				
general	.01 (.15)	.02 (.07)	.46 (.56)	-.16 (-.09)
spousal	.06 (.08)	.34 (.16)	.25 (.19)	-.24 (-.43)
cognitive	.13 (.20)	.46 (.10)	.12 (.18)	-.06 (-.03)
affective	-.49 (-.72)	.08 (.17)	-.37 (-.42)	.12 (.20)

(table continues)

(Table 1 continued)

	Control Sample Mother Behaviors			
	Investment	Involvement	Positive affect	Negative affect
Empathy				
general	.50 (.50)	.10 (.34)	.23 (.01)	-.32 (-.10)
spousal	.41 (.24)	.14 (.19)	.18 (.28)	-.13 (-.37)
cognitive	.08 (.27)	.20 (.14)	.08 (.21)	-.28 (-.56)
affective	-.03 (-.28)	-.24 (-.51)	-.15 (-.05)	.12 (.42)

	Control Sample Child Behaviors			
	Compliance	Self Control	Positive affect	Negative affect
Empathy				
general	.01 (.12)	.31 (.20)	.23 (.26)	-.12 (-.13)
spousal	.35 (.43)	.22 (.34)	.33 (.66)	-.21 (-.11)
cognitive	.39 (.40)	.40 (.66)	.52 (.68)	-.30 (-.10)
affective	-.09 (-.23)	-.16 (-.19)	.03 (.24)	.06 (.10)

Notes: Pearson Product Moment Correlations ($r<.38$, $p<.05$; $r<.48$, $p<.01$). Numbers in parentheses are partial correlations controlling stress and social network ($r<.42$, $p<.05$; $r<.54$, $p<.01$).

Source: Feshbach and Howes

Table 2

Family Atmosphere Correlates of Maternal and Paternal Empathy

	Maternal Empathy	Paternal Empathy
Family Cohesion	.62*** (N=44)	.33 (N=22)
Family Conflict	-.32* (N=44)	-.20 (N=22)
Maternal Stress	-.26+ (N=44)	-.21 (N=22)

\+ p<.10
* p<.05
*** p<.001

Source: Repetti, Feshbach, and Nelms

Table 3

Correlations of Mothers' and Fathers' Child-Rearing Attitudes (Block Subscales) with Parental Empathy

Child-Rearing Attitude Scale	Cognitive Component	Emotional Expression	Spousal Empathy	General Empathy	Total Empathy
Mothers					
Autonomy	.30+	.34*	.31*	.45**	.45**
Over-Protective	-.10	.06	-.25	-.20	-.20
Affectionate	.33*	.57***	.41**	.29+	.52***
Inhibit Emotions	-.23	-.39*	-.36*	-.24	-.41**
Hostility/ Anger	-.46**	-.53***	-.29+	-.21	-.47**
Punitive	-.34*	-.31+	-.29+	-.42**	-.45**
Disagreement	-.40	-.47*	-.05	-.26	-.44*
Fathers					
Autonomy	.06	.39+	.03	-.03	.14
Over-Protective	-.40*	.13	-.14	.20	-.16
Affectionate	.20	.43*	.10	-.17	.21
Inhibit Emotions	-.35+	-.45*	.03	.10	-.31
Hostility/ Anger	-.15	-.16	.23	.28	.05
Punitive	-.36+	-.49*	.11	.08	-.27
Disagreement	-.11	-.63***	-.22	-.24	-.47*

(table continues)

(Table 3 continued)

Note: Sample sizes for correlations involving mothers range from 35-41. Sample sizes for correlations involving fathers range for 24-25. Correlations involving parental disagreement are based on 21 mother-father pairs.

\+ $p<.10$
* $p<.05$
** $p<.01$
*** $p<.001$

Figure Caption

1a A schematic illustration of the interrelationships among parent empathy, related parental attributes, and child personality, adjustment, and cognitive functioning.

1b A schematic illustration of the interrelationships among parent empathy, related parental attributes, and child personality, adjustment, and cognitive functioning.

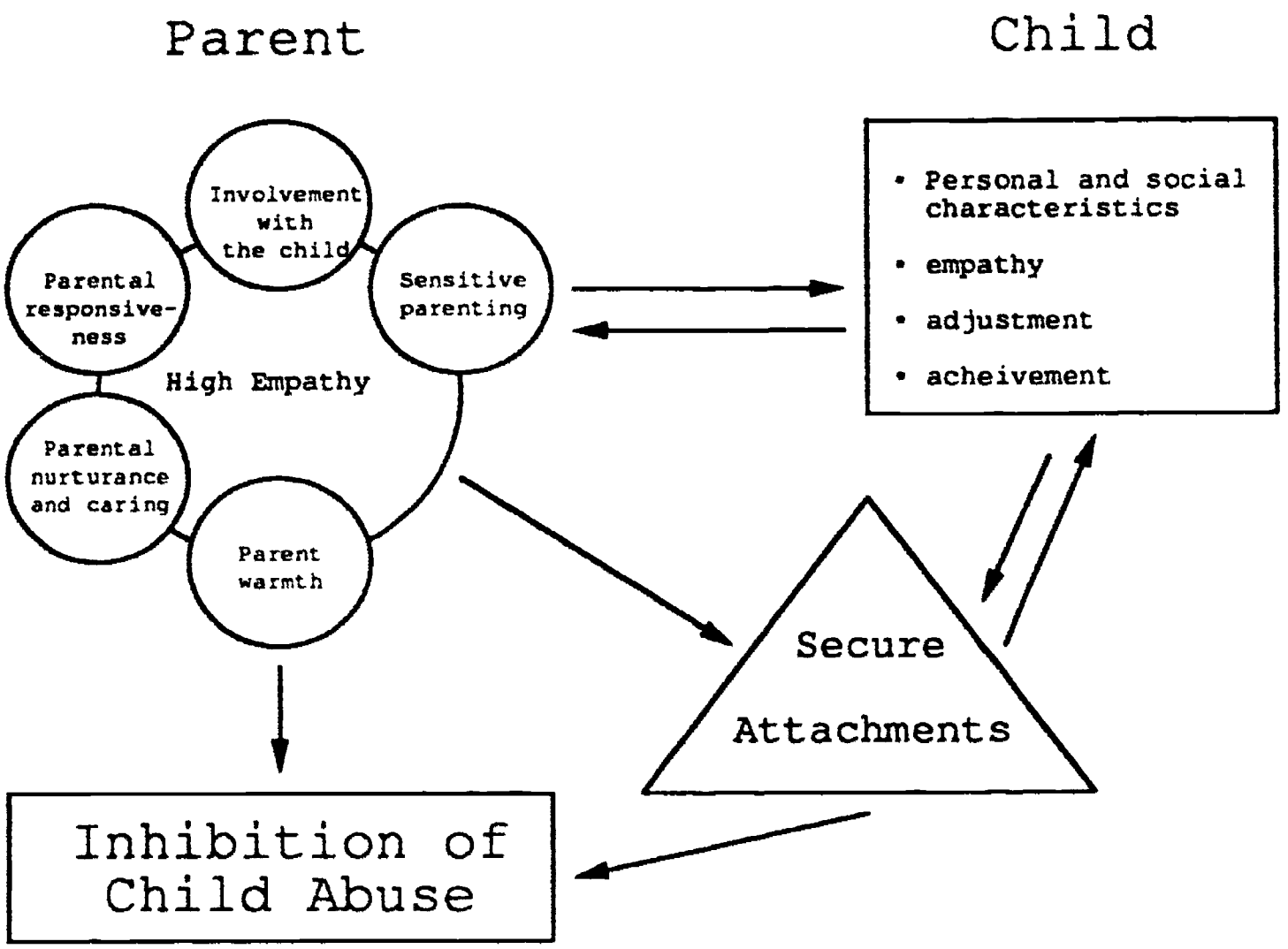
Parent
Child
Involvement with the child
Parental responsive-ness
Sensitive parenting
High Empathy
Parental nurturance and caring
Parent warmth
• Personal and social characteristics
• empathy
• adjustment
• acheivement
Secure Attachments
Inhibition of Child Abuse

Figure 1a.

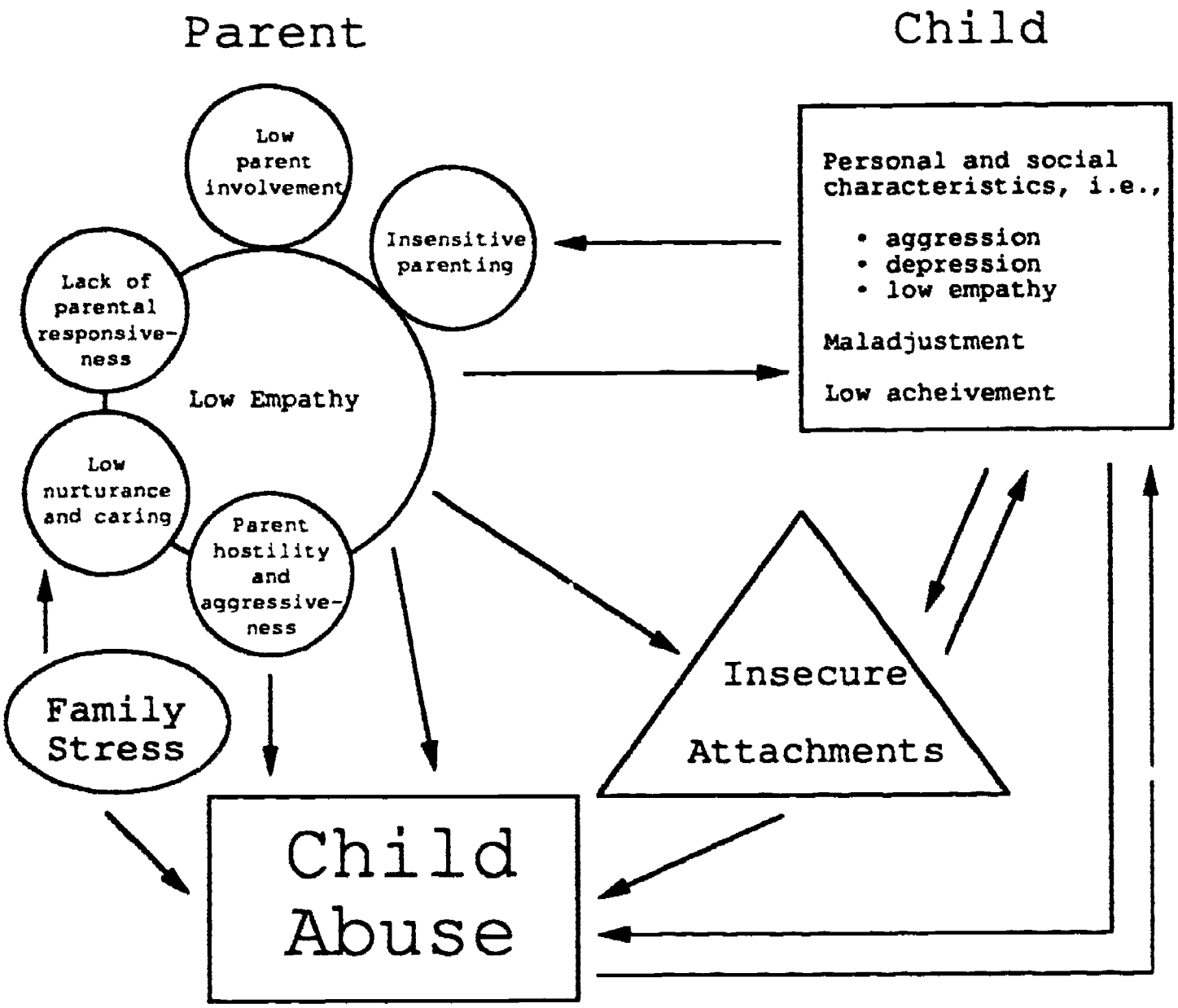
Parent
Child
Low parent involvement
Insensitive parenting
Lack of parental responsive-ness
Low Empathy
Low nurturance and caring
Parent hostility and aggressive-ness
Family Stress
Personal and social characteristics, i.e.,
• aggression
• depression
• low empathy
Maladjustment
Low acheivement
Insecure Attachments
Child Abuse

Figure 1b.