HANDBOOK OF ADOLESCENT PSYCHOLOGY

THIRD EDITION

VOLUME 2: CONTEXTUAL INFLUENCES ON ADOLESCENT DEVELOPMENT

EDITED BY
RICHARD M. LERNER
LAURENCE STEINBERG

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Preface

In 2004, in our preface to the second edition of the *Handbook of Adolescent Psychology*, we noted that 24 years separated the first and second editions of this work. At the time of the publication of the first edition, the field was one where relatively little empirical work was being conducted and where, as well, the major theoretical frame was psychoanalytic. There was present as well a little cognitive developmental theory, a touch of behaviorism, and just the beginnings (in the prescient chapter by Elder, 1980) of a dynamic, developmental systems model.

By 2004, 852 pages and 25 chapters (plus an afterword) were needed to summarize the vast empirical literature that had developed in the previous quarter-century. The chapters of the second edition revealed that the role of grand theories of adolescence, whether psychoanalytic or not, had waned, and that the sorts of mutually influential, person ←→ context relational models of development that Elder had discussed (represented as individual ←→ context relations) had become the predominant theoretical lens in the study of adolescent development, as they had within the field of human development more broadly (Damon & Lerner, 2006, 2008). In the second edition, the contexts in which adolescent development takes place received considerably more attention than had been the case previously. Moreover, the second edition reflected a growing interest in how theoretically-predicated, empirically-based knowledge about adolescence could be used to capitalize on the strengths of young people and promote their positive development.

We suggested in 2004 that the quality and quantity of the ongoing work in the scientific study of adolescence indicated that the field was remarkably active; that the increasing numbers of high-quality researchers drawn to the study of adolescent development portended an even greater growth in knowledge than had taken place between the publication of the first and second editions of the *Handbook;* and that it was likely that the field's future would be marked by the rapid evolution of the theoretical and empirical emphases represented in the second edition of the *Handbook*. Our expectations have been confirmed, but the expansion of the field took place with a breadth and depth of scholarship that we could not have fully anticipated.

The publication of the third edition of the *Handbook of Adolescent Psychology* in 2009 represents only a 5-year period between the present and prior edition, about 25% of the time between the first and the second editions. However, within this relatively short period, the knowledge base with the field has exploded. The number of chapters we have included in this edition in order to fairly represent the range of high-quality scholarship defining the cutting edge of the contemporary study of adolescent development has increased by more than 50% and now fills two volumes.

Framing this scientific work are both theoretical models that stress processes of systemic, individual ←→ context relations (see our opening chapter on the history of scientific research on adolescence in volume 1) and scientific methods that include both sophisticated quantitative techniques to study change (Little, Card, Preacher, & McConnell) and rich qualitative, ethnographic procedures that give voice to the developing adolescent and insight into the nature of his or her social, cultural, and historical context (Burton, Garrett-Peters, & Eaton). The contemporary study of individual development reflects this dynamic between

person and context—whether the focus of analysis is brain development (Paus), puberty (Susman & Dorn), thinking (Kuhn), social cognition (Smetana & Villalobos), moral cognition and prosocial behavior (Eisenberg, Morris, McDaniel, & Spinrad), identity and self (Côté), gender and gender role development (Galambos, Berenbaum, & McHale), autonomy and attachment (McElhaney, Allen, Stephenson, & Hare), academic motivation (Eccles & Roeser), spirituality and religious development (King & Roeser), or sex (Diamond & Savin-Williams).

The study of interpersonal relationships in adolescence—involving those with parents (Laursen & Collins), siblings (East), peers (Brown & Larson), romantic partners (Connolly & McIsaac), or mentors (Rhodes & Lowe)—illustrate that the process of adolescent development involves dynamic, mutually influential exchanges between the developing youth and significant others. Indeed, even when the focus of developmental analysis is on the features of the institutional or cultural contexts of adolescence, the relations between the characteristics of the young person and the features of the settings in which he or she develops constitute the basic process of change during this period of life. These relational processes unfold in schools (Elmore), afterschool settings (Mahoney, Vandell, Simpkins, & Zarrett), workplaces (Staff, Messersmith, & Schulenberg), and neighborhoods (Leventhal, Dupéré, & Brooks-Gunn), and are influenced by poverty (McLoyd, Kaplan, Purtell, Bagley, Hardaway, & Smalls), the structure of the transition to adulthood within the United States and internationally (Hamilton & Hamilton), ethnicity and immigration (Fuligni, Hughes, & Way), mass media (Roberts, Henricksen, & Foehr), the legal system (Woolard & Scott), globalization (Larson, Wilson, & Rickman), and culture (Schlegel).

Theory and research about individual development, interpersonal relationships, and contextual influences on these processes underscore that the adolescent years are marked by both opportunity and vulnerability. This potential for intraindividual variation in the course and outcomes of individual ←→ context relations is brought into high relief in the burgeoning scholarship applying developmental science to help youth confront the normative and nonnormative challenges of the period and, as well, to promote their positive, healthy development. Scholarship about adolescent risk and resilience (Compas & Reeslund), positive youth development (Lerner, Phelps, Forman, & Bowers), and citizenship (Sherrod & Lauckhardt) rely on these bidirectional models to frame research. Similar use of these dynamic conceptions of development occurs in studies of internalizing problems (Graber & Sontag), externalizing problems (Farrington), substance use (Chassin, Hussong, & Beltran), developmental disabilities (Hauser-Cram, Krauss, & Kersh), and physical health (Ozer & Irwin), as well as in efforts to promote positive development through community-based programs and social policies (Balsano, Theokas, & Bobek). Together, then, the two volumes of the third edition of the *Handbook of Adolescent Psychology* depict a field that is enriching our understanding of the basic, relational process shaping trajectories of development across the adolescent period; providing important leadership in the study of human development over the entire life span; and offering innovative and scientifically grounded means to promote healthy development among young people in the United States and abroad.

There are numerous people to thank for their contribution to this edition of the *Handbook*. First and foremost, we owe our greatest debt of gratitude to the colleagues who wrote the chapters for the *Handbook*. Their careful scholarship and commitment to the field have allowed us to produce a volume that will benefit scientists, practitioners, and policy makers alike.

We are deeply grateful also to Lauren White, Editor at the Institute for Applied Research in Youth Development. Her expertise and tenacity in overseeing the day-to-day management of this work through all phases of manuscript

development and production were invaluable to us. The overall quality of the *Handbook* is a direct result of her impressive ability to track and coordinate the myriad editorial tasks associated with a project of this scope, her astute editorial skills and wisdom, and her unfailing good humor and patience (with the editors as well as the contributors).

We also appreciate greatly the important contributions to this book made by Jennifer Davison, managing editor at the Institute. Her knowledge of the manuscript development and production process, and her talents for enhancing the efficiency and quality of the editing, were enormous assets that enabled this work to be completed in a timely and high-quality manner.

We are indebted to our editor at John Wiley & Sons, Patricia Rossi. Her enthusiasm for our vision for the *Handbook*, unflagging support, and collegial and collaborative approach to the development of this project were vital bases for the successful completion of the *Handbook*.

Several organizations that supported our scholarship during the time we worked on the *Handbook* also deserve our thanks. Tufts University and Temple University have provided the support and resources necessary to undertake and complete this project. In addition, Richard M. Lerner thanks the National 4-H Council, the Philip Morris USA Youth Smoking Prevention Department, and the John Templeton Foundation. Laurence Steinberg is especially indebted to Temple University for supporting a sabbatical leave during which most of his work on this book was completed.

Finally, we want to once again dedicate this *Handbook* to our greatest sources of inspiration, both for our work on the *Handbook* and for our scholarship in the field of adolescence: our children—Justin, Blair, Jarrett, and Ben. Now all in their young adulthood, they have taught us our greatest lessons about the nature and potentials of adolescent development.

R.M.L.

L.S

July, 2008

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PART I

Interpersonal Influences

CHAPTER 1

Parent–Child Relationships During Adolescence

BRETT LAURSEN AND W. ANDREW COLLINS

No aspect of adolescent development has received more attention from the public and from researchers than parent–child relationships. Much of the research indicates that despite altered patterns of interaction, relationships with parents remain important social and emotional resources well beyond the childhood years (for recent reviews, see Collins & Steinberg, 2006; Smetana, Campione-Barr, & Metzger, 2006). Yet it is a challenge to reconcile this conclusion with the widespread perception that parent–child relationships decline in quality and influence over the course of the adolescent years. The aim of this chapter is to specify the characteristics and processes of parent–child relationships that sustain the centrality of the family amid the extensive changes of adolescence. We will argue that it is the content and the quality of these relationships, rather than the actions of either parent or adolescent alone, that determine the nature and extent of family influences on adolescent development. We will also argue that divergence between academic prescriptions and public perceptions about parent–adolescent relationships can be traced to the relative emphasis that each places on potential individual differences.

The chapter reflects three premises that have emerged from the sizable literature on parent–child relationships during adolescence. First, relationships with parents undergo transformations across the adolescent years that set the stage for less hierarchical interactions during adulthood. Second, family relationships have far-reaching implications for concurrent and long-term relationships with friends, romantic partners, teachers, and other adults, as well as for individual mental health, psychosocial adjustment, school performance, and eventual occupational choice and success. Third, contextual and cultural variations significantly shape family relationships and experiences that, in turn, affect the course and outcomes of development both during and beyond adolescence.

The chapter is divided into four main sections. The first section outlines theoretical views of parent–adolescent relationships and their developmental significance. The second section focuses on the behavior of parents and children and on interpersonal processes between them, with particular attention given to the distinctive characteristics of parent–child relationships and how these relationships change during adolescence. The third section considers whether and how parent–child relationships and their transformations are significant for adolescent development. The fourth section focuses on variability in parent–child relationships during adolescence as a function of structural, economic, and demographic distinctions among families.

THEORIES OF PARENT–ADOLESCENT RELATIONSHIPS AND THEIR INFLUENCE

For heuristic purposes, we have divided theories of parent–adolescent relationships into two groups: those that describe changes in

relationships across the adolescent years and those that describe the influence of parenting and parent–child relationships. The first set of theories is dedicated to explaining the significant transformations that take place in parent–adolescent relationships. The second set of theories is dedicated to explaining the contributions that parents and parent–child relationships make to individual adolescent adjustment.

Theories Addressing Relationship Transformations

Conceptual models of transformation in parent–adolescent relationships vary in whether their primary focus is on the adolescent or on the relationship (Laursen & Collins, 2004). The prevalent perspective for most of the last century was that adolescents' physical, cognitive, and social maturation undermined patterns of interaction in close relationships that were established during childhood. The implications of individual change varied from one theoretical perspective to another, the common focus being the relative turbulence and instability of relationships during adolescence relative to those during childhood. More recent models emphasize stable features of parent–child relationships. Enduring bonds forged between parents and children are assumed to be the foundation for continuity in the functional properties of the relationship that transcend age-related changes in the characteristics of participants and alterations in the content and form of their interactions.

Models of Individual Change

Theories of individual change focus on disruptions caused by adolescent maturation and their potential to destabilize parent–child relationships. These models hold that changes in adolescents provoke changes in families. Maturationist models assume that a period of diminished closeness and heightened conflict accompanies adolescent maturation and that these perturbations continue until parent–adolescent relationships and roles are renegotiated. Most models hold that a rapprochement follows this period of normative relationship turbulence (Collins, 1995). Conflict should become less frequent and better managed, closeness should increase, and social interactions should grow more sophisticated and constructive as a result of transformations in relationships.

Psychoanalytic theorists (A. Freud, 1958; S. Freud, 1921/1949) assumed that hormonal changes at puberty give rise to unwelcome Oedipal urges that foster impulse control problems and anxiety, as well as rebelliousness and distance from the family. More recent psychoanalytic formulations place greater emphasis on adolescent autonomy striving and ego identity development than on impulse control (Blos, 1979; Erikson, 1968). These later models converge on the dual contentions that awareness of parental fallibility (deidealization) and psychic emancipation drive a wedge between parents and children that is exacerbated by the inner turmoil brought on by adolescent hormonal fluctuations. This account implies that heightened conflict and diminished closeness inevitably follow maturational changes, as adolescents grapple with psychic disturbances. Child withdrawal and disengagement should continue into young adulthood, although a measure of closeness may be reestablished after parents are no longer perceived as a threat to the ego, sometime after identity achievement is complete and intimate relationships with peers are established.

Evolutionary views also emphasize the role of puberty in transforming relationships, but propose that change processes stem from physical and cognitive advances that are designed to encourage adolescents to separate from the family in order to seek mates elsewhere (Steinberg, 1989). In this view, adolescent maturation threatens parental dominance, resulting in heightened conflict with and diminished closeness to parents. This prompts youth to turn away from their family to be comforted by peers who are experiencing similar relationship disruptions. Some envision a reciprocal process, whereby independence hastens pubertal maturation and vice versa

(Belsky, Steinberg, & Draper, 1991). Although evolutionary views stipulate no mechanism for reestablishing parent–child closeness during young adulthood, it may be that parental investment in offspring and the warmth experienced in earlier periods provide a foundation of positive affect and regard that enables both parties to transcend the difficulties of adolescence (Gray & Steinberg, 1999). Improved relations should follow the child's transition to parenthood to the extent that grandparents are interested in providing resources and assistance to help ensure the survival and reproductive success of the next generation (Crosnoe & Elder, 2002; Smith & Drew, 2002).

Other maturational models give cognitive development a central role in parent–adolescent relationship changes. In these accounts, advances in abstract and complex reasoning foster a more nuanced appreciation of interpersonal distinctions and an increasingly egalitarian view of relationships that were previously oriented around the unilateral authority of adults (e.g., Selman, 1980; Youniss & Smollar, 1985). As a result, adolescents increasingly aspire to reciprocity and equal power in their interactions with parents. The same cognitive advances underlie the emerging tendency to consider certain issues as matters of personal volition, even though they previously were under parental jurisdiction (Smetana, 1988). Parents' reluctance to transform the hierarchical relationships established in childhood into more egalitarian ones creates conflict and curtails closeness. Eventually, familial roles are renegotiated to acknowledge the child's enhanced status and maturity. Conflict should dissipate as relationship roles and expectations are realigned, but the long-term implications for relationship closeness and harmony depend on whether parents and children are successful in revising their relationship in a mutually satisfactory manner.

A fourth group of theorists view physical and cognitive maturation as sources of constraints and demands on adolescents but give equal emphasis to changes in social expectations and the need to adapt to a variety of new situations during age-graded transitions. Four kinds of moderated maturationist models typify this approach. The first set of models implicates changes in parents as the source of alterations in parent–adolescent relationships (Steinberg, 2001). Parents' developmental issues related to careers, personal goals, and future orientation can exacerbate the difficulty of the adjustments required in parent–adolescent relationships. Parents are also confronted with diminished or extinguished physical and reproductive capabilities and fading allure at a time when adolescent sexuality and attractiveness are blossoming, both of which may aggravate conflict and disengagement (Steinberg & Steinberg, 1994). A strong orientation toward work and investments in other nonfamilial domains could mean that parents view adolescents' movement toward autonomy as positive, ameliorating some of the obstacles to relationship transformation (Silverberg & Steinberg, 1990). Reestablishing positive relationship ties may be difficult for those who experience the most disruption, particularly if parents are unable or unwilling to address factors in their own lives that exacerbated transitional turmoil.

Two related theories emphasize the role of parents' beliefs and expectations in moderating age-related changes in relationships with adolescent children. Generalized or category-based beliefs models (Eccles, 1992; Holmbeck, 1996) posit a straightforward link between parents' stereotypes and expectations about adolescence in general and parents' relations with their own adolescent children. Beliefs become a self-fulfilling prophesy: Those who expect adolescence to be a period of turmoil are more likely to behave in a manner that provokes relationship deterioration compared with those who expect adolescence to be relatively benign. The expectancy violation–realignment model (Collins, 1995) begins with the assumption that interactions between parents and children are mediated by cognitive and emotional processes associated with expectancies about the behavior of the other person. In periods

of rapid developmental change, such as the transition to adolescence, parents' expectancies often are violated. In younger age groups, change may occur more gradually, so that discrepancies are both less common and less salient than in periods of rapid multiple changes, such as adolescence. Expectancy violations are assumed to be a source of conflict that eventually stimulates parents to realign their expectations. It follows that changes in the tenor of parent–child relationships over the course of adolescence will vary as a function of the accuracy of parental expectations; those with unrealistic expectations should experience frequent violations and more relationship disruption than those with accurate expectations. Expectancies should also shape relationship recovery. Parents who foresee improved relations, particularly those who anticipate altered expressions of relationship closeness, are more likely to successfully repair relationships than those who expect irreparable damage and those who expect a return to the perceived tranquility of childhood.

The second set of moderated maturationist models implicates changes in parent–older sibling relationships in alterations in parent–younger sibling relationships. Models differ in terms of their postulated consequences for younger siblings. According to the spillover model, changes in relations between firstborn children and parents dictate the timing of changes in relations between later born children and parents (Larson & Almeida, 1999). Relationships with later born children deteriorate and are renegotiated concurrent with (or shortly after) relationships with firstborn children. Thus, child maturation is more strongly related to parent–child relationship change in firstborn than in later born adolescents. Several mechanisms besides child maturation may be responsible for changes in relationships between later born children and parents, including sibling modeling and imitation, and a parental desire to avoid differential treatment. Parent–adolescent relationship decline and recovery may depend on the extent to which firstborn and later born children share the burden of conflict and role renegotiation. Relationships between parents and "me too" children should be more resilient because firstborns are apt to bear the brunt of negativity with parents and because younger children may continue to look to parents to satisfy more of their emotional needs (Whiteman, McHale, & Crouter, 2003).

A related theory also postulates birth order differences in changes in parent–adolescent relationships. The learning-from-experience model argues that parents hone their skills with firstborn children and are thus better able to cope constructively with developmental changes in later born children (Whiteman et al., 2003). According to this view, it is the magnitude of parent–child transitions that differs between firstborns and later borns, not the timing of change. Declines in warmth and increases in conflict should be greater for parents and firstborn children than for parents and later born children because parents have learned how to navigate transitions during adolescence. Improved parenting skills should not only minimize relationship disruption but should also help relationships with later born children recover more quickly and perhaps more satisfactorily than relationships with firstborn children.

The third moderated maturationist model implicates parent and child gender in changes in parent–child relationships. The gender intensification model argues that with the onset of puberty, parents increasingly assume responsibility for the socialization of same-sex offspring (Hill & Lynch, 1983). The original model suggested that parent–child closeness increases in same-sex dyads and decreases in other-sex dyads. Another possibility, however, is that same-sex parent–child relationships become closer than other-sex relationships because, although absolute levels of closeness decline in both, the latter deteriorates more than the former. The model also has implications for parent–child conflict: With the advent of puberty, same-sex parent–child relationships should experience