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Authoritarian behavior leads to insecure people

Submitted by editor on October 24, 2010 - 10:33

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The objective was to analyse which style of parental socialisation is ideal in Spain by measuring the psychosocial adjustment of children, Fernando García, co-author of the study and a researcher at the UV, tells SINC.

The study, which has been published in the latest issue of the journal *Infancia y Aprendizaje*, was produced on the basis of a nationwide survey carried out on 948 children and teenagers aged between 10 and 14 (52% of whom were girls), describing the socialisation practices of their parents. On the basis of these answers, the families were classified into one of four classic parental socialisation types – authoritative, authoritarian, indulgent and neglectful.

The results show that the ideal family style in Spain is the indulgent one. The scores for children from indulgent families were the same, or even better, than those from authoritative families, the researcher points out.

According to the expert, imposed discipline systems, such as punishments, deprivation and strict rules, which try to force children do things, have a knock-on effect on family self-esteem, and are associated with incomplete emotional development and a certain level of resentment towards the family, even if they are applied by parents who have very cordial relationships with their children, at least in cultures such as in Spain, where little value is placed on hierarchical relationships.

The researchers highlight the need for parents to work hard on aspects that are often not sufficiently addressed, such as communication, polite relationships, showing an interest in childrens problems and giving reasoned explanations about the consequences of their actions. These are activities that, at the end of the day, call for involvement, dedication and care, says García, with the objective being for all people to become mature, responsible and able to do things for themselves.

Four family types based on relationships with children

Family classification is obtained by combining behaviours that involve different levels of demands being made and responsibility given. Firstly, the authoritative model describes families that provide clear rules, giving reasons for them to their children in an affectionate and flexible way, while also expecting these rules to be followed. The authoritarian model is similar to the authoritative one, in that it is demanding or controlling, but it differs in that the parents are less affectionate.

On the other hand there are parents who fall within the neglectful and indulgent models, which are characterised by applying low levels of repression. However, those in the first group are not very affectionate while those in the second group are very affectionate.

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References:

Fernando García, Enrique Gracia, What is the optimum parental socialisation style in Spain? A study with children and adolescents aged 10-14 years, *Infancia y Aprendizaje*, 33 (3): 365-384, septiembre de 2010.

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