



A Person-Oriented Approach to Understanding Dimensions of Parenting

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Parenting is a frequent target of early intervention efforts

- Parenting affects children's early development (Brooks-Gunn & Markman, 2005).
- Many early intervention programs, such as Early Head Start, work directly and intensively with parents to improve parenting behaviors, attitudes, and knowledge.
- Improved parenting is related to children's developmental outcomes (Bradley et al., 1994; Love et al., 2005; Sweet & Appelbaum, 2004).

Person-oriented approach

- Latent Class Analysis (LCA): A holistic and dynamic view of individuals, viewing individual functioning and development as an organized whole (Bergman & Trost, 2006; Bergman & Magnusson, 1997; Magnusson & Allen, 1983)
- A study of low-income African-American parents showed classes of parenting patterns described as “Aggravated but Nurturant; Cognitively Stimulating; Patient and Nurturant; and Low Nurturance” (McGroder, 2000)
- Person-oriented approaches have identified patterns that typify the kinds of resources and services parents seek or are referred to for their children (Greenberg et al., 2001; Leventhal et al., 2000) and are compatible with recommendations for practice in many early intervention programs that focus on children, parents, or both (e.g., Cocozzelli & Constable, 1986)
- National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and the Association for Childhood Education International (ACEI) both recommend a focus on the “whole” child in which different developmental domains are addressed together in activities that support growth in more than one domain at a time (ACEI, 2006; NAEYC, 2000)

The Research Questions

What parenting patterns typify distinct classes of parents?

What predicts parenting-class membership?

Overview

Data from the public-use data set of the Early Head Start Research and Evaluation (EHSRE) Project along with new ratings of parenting behavior (PICCOLO) from the EHSRE archive of videotaped parent-child observations. Over 2,000 videotapes were observed and 14 parent behavior ratings were used as indicators of parenting class. Latent class analyses using the parenting-class indicators were conducted across three time points to characterize this sample of Early Head Start mothers.

Methods

Participants: The participants in this study come from the longitudinal EHSRE Project

N (14 months) = 2,109

N (24 months) = 1,669

N (36 months) = 1,644

Analysis at three time points: child ages 14, 24, and 36 months

Table 1: Sample Characteristics

| | EHS | | Comparison | |
|--|----------|------|------------|------|
| | <i>N</i> | % | <i>N</i> | % |
| | 1,088 | 51.5 | 1,021 | 48.4 |
| Mother was a teenager at birth of first child | 418 | 38.4 | 386 | 37.8 |
| Mother's race | | | | |
| African American | 372 | 34.2 | 325 | 31.8 |
| European American | 403 | 37.0 | 398 | 39.0 |
| Hispanic | 243 | 22.3 | 216 | 21.2 |
| Mother's education | | | | |
| Less than high school education | 469 | 44.8 | 450 | 45.7 |
| High school education only | 303 | 27.8 | 284 | 28.0 |
| Attended college | 275 | 26.6 | 195 | 19.5 |
| Mother is only adult in household | 380 | 34.9 | 327 | 32.3 |
| Families having only one child < 5 yrs. | 999 | 91.8 | 934 | 91.5 |
| Families having at least one child age 6 –17 years | 395 | 36.5 | 324 | 31.7 |
| Target child is male | 549 | 50.5 | 519 | 50.8 |
| Target child was < 2,500 grams at birth | 74 | 6.8 | 46 | 4.5 |
| Target child born > 3 weeks premature | 116 | 10.7 | 78 | 7.6 |
| Public assistance received by family | | | | |
| Food stamps | 482 | 44.3 | 435 | 42.6 |
| SSI | 68 | 6.3 | 74 | 7.2 |
| Public housing assistance | 103 | 9.5 | 91 | 8.9 |
| AFDC | 299 | 27.5 | 234 | 25.9 |
| WIC | 913 | 83.9 | 826 | 80.9 |
| Medicaid | 789 | 72.5 | 717 | 70.2 |

Table 2: Measures

| Parenting-class indicators | Measure |
|---|--|
| Sensitivity, Positive regard, Cognitive stimulation, Detachment, Intrusiveness, Negative regard | Video-taped 3-bag task parent-child interaction |
| Affection, Responsiveness, Encouragement, Teaching | PICCOLO Rating Scale (Roggman, |
| Emotional Climate and Verbal-social (14 - and 24 month only), Warmth (36 month only), Language | Home Observation for the Measurement of the Environment (Caldwell & Bradley, 1984) |

Table 3. Odds ratios for 3-class Latent Models
Reference group: Developmental class

| | Effect | Odds ratio |
|---------------------------|---|-------------------|
| Dismissive Class | | |
| | Mother was a teenager at birth of first child | 2.22** |
| | Mother's education level | 0.79** |
| | Target child is male | 1.19 |
| | African American mother | 2.58** |
| | European American mother | 0.49* |
| | Family receives SSI | 2.70** |
| | Family receives public housing assistance | 1.94 |
| Unsupportive Class | | |
| | Mother was a teenager at birth of first child | 1.19 |
| | Mother's education level | 0.77** |
| | Target child is male | 1.40* |
| | African American mother | 1.59 |
| | European American mother | 0.59 |
| | Family receives SSI | 1.24 |
| | Family receives public housing assistance | 1.21 |

Mixture Plot of 3-class Solution at Child Age 14 Months

Standardized Scores Estimated Means

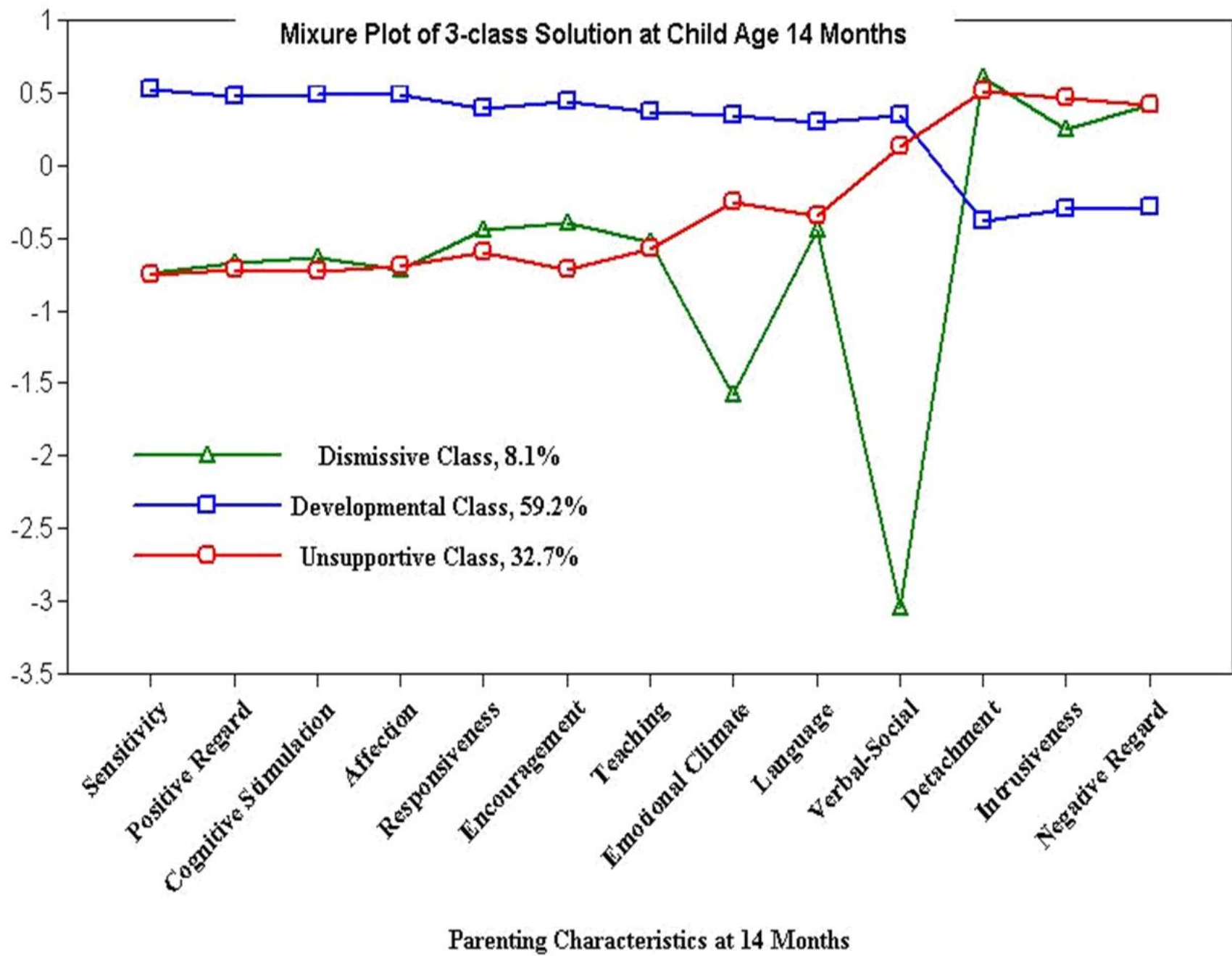


Table 4. Odds ratios for 3-class Latent model Reference group: Developmental class

| | Effect | Odds ratio |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|------------|
| Dismissive Class | | |
| | Mother's education level | 0.70** |
| | Target child is male | 1.08 |
| | African American mother | 7.14** |
| Unsupportive Class | | |
| | Mother's education level | 0.75** |
| | Target child is male | 1.47* |
| | African American mother | 2.72** |

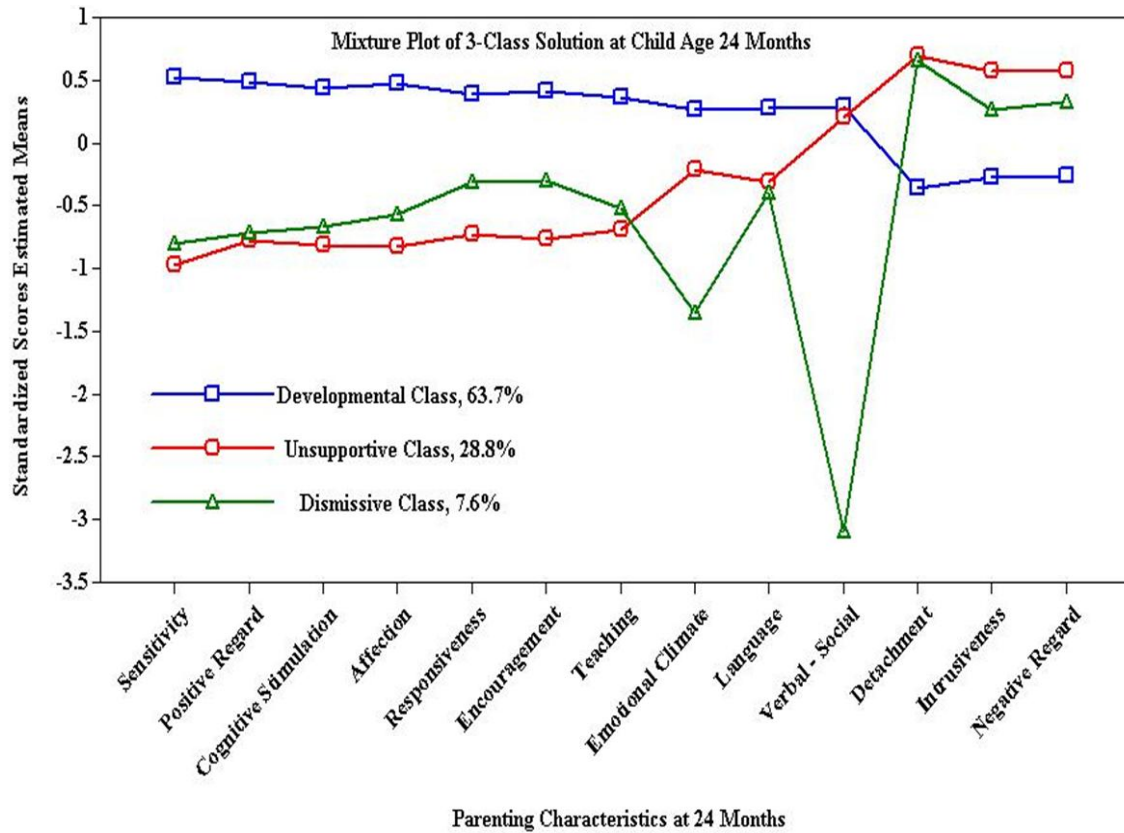
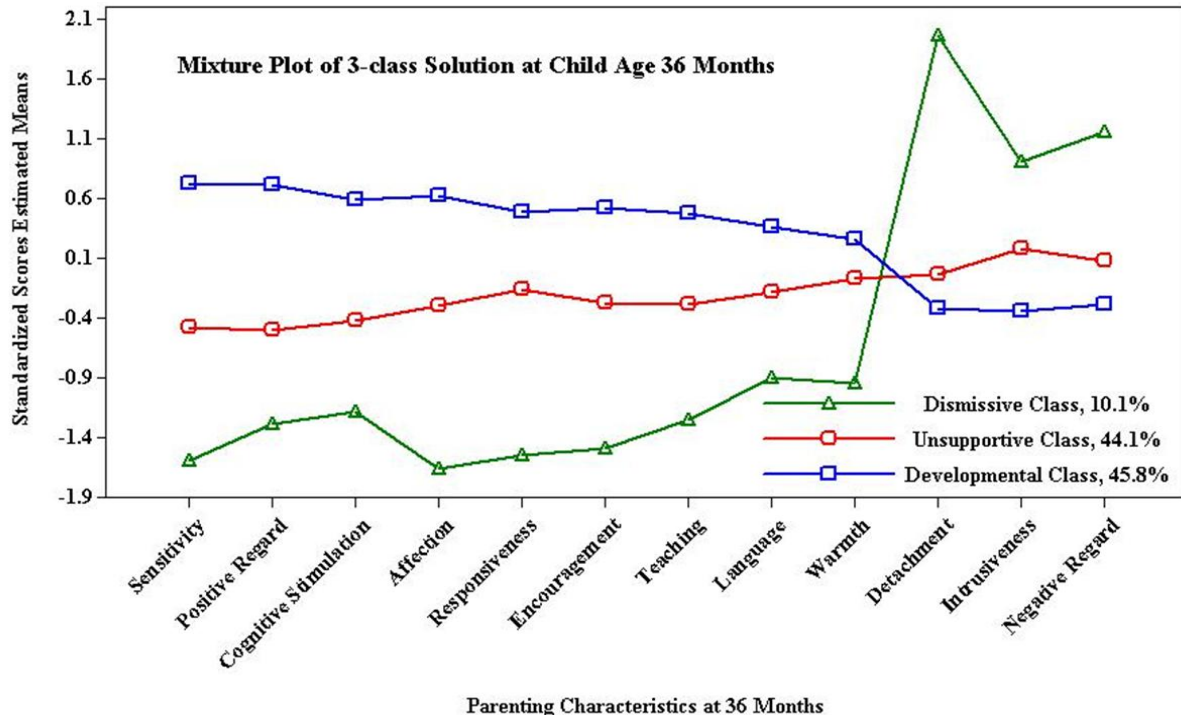


Table 5. Odds ratios for 3-class Latent model Reference group: Developmental class

| | Effect | Odds ratio |
|---------------------------|---|------------|
| Dismissive Class | | |
| | Mother was a teenager at birth of first child | 1.63* |
| | Mother's education level | 0.70* |
| | Number of young children (< 5yrs) | 1.52* |
| | Family receives food stamps | 1.79* |
| Unsupportive Class | | |
| | Mother was a teenager at birth of first child | 1.48* |
| | Mother's education level | 0.77* |
| | Number of young children (< 5yrs) | 1.25* |
| | Family receives food stamps | 1.21 |



Discussion

- Rich descriptions of parenting classes can provide practitioners with data for evidence-based practice
- The match of services to types of parents will provide particularly useful guidance for practitioners (e.g., home visitors, parent coordinators) working directly with parents

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