

**RACE, PARENTAL RESPONSES TO INADEQUATE ACHIEVEMENT, AND
ACADEMIC OUTCOMES ***

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ABSTRACT

Despite numerous studies on parental involvement in children's academic schooling, there is a dearth of knowledge on how parents respond specifically to inadequate academic performance. In this study we assess the degree of racial variation in (1) parents' likely response to inadequate academic achievement and (2) the effect of parents' responses on children's achievement. Using data from the Child Development Supplement (N=1041) to the Panel Study of Income Dynamics, we find that White and Black parents differ markedly in the ways they are likely to respond to inadequate academic performance. Our findings are provocative and reveal that parents whose children are most in need of academic improvement respond to inadequate achievement in ways that exacerbate the problem.

One of the primary predictors of school achievement is the role of parents. In addition to being important for children's school achievement (e.g., Chu and Willms 1996; Madigan 1994; Muller 1995, 1998; Majoribanks 1979; Topping 1992; Crosnoe 2001), parental involvement also predicts numerous other schooling outcomes such as truancy and school dropout (e.g., Domina 2005; McNeal 1999). Given this previous research on the importance of parents in the schooling process, it is not surprising that parental involvement is one of the most important goals of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB)—the major legislation for closing racial and social class differences in achievement by 2014 (see Section 1118). While this portion of the act is driven by the belief that families are critical for improving the achievement of inadequate performing students, there remains a dearth of knowledge on how parents respond to inadequate academic performance. Also, virtually no attention has been given to the potential impact these responses have on school achievement. While schools can enact strategies to handle inadequate performance such as, recruiting and training high-quality teachers, or strengthening the quality of program instruction, it is less clear what measures parents can take to help their child improve academically.

The necessity of this line of research becomes apparent when one considers the magnitude of racial differences in achievement. Data from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)—created to regularly test nationally representative samples of students in grades 4, 8 and 12 (or sometimes ages 9, 13, 17)—shows that black 12th graders score lower than White 8th graders in reading, math, U.S. history and geography (Thernstrom and Thernstrom 2003). Hedges and Nowell (1999) conclude that the pace at which mean group differences in test scores have decreased over the past 30 years suggests gap convergence would take 30 years in reading and about 75 years in math. They also conclude gap convergence on

non-NAEP surveys would take 50 years in reading and more than a century in math.

Previous studies on parents and children give reason to expect racial variation in the strategies parents are inclined to employ in response to inadequate performance. In their study of cultural variations in parenting among two-parent families, Julian, McKenry, and McKelvey (1994) find that ethnic parents (e.g., Blacks, Asians, and Hispanics) place greater emphasis on their children's academic success than White parents. However, they also find ethnic parents express greater strictness and control over their children. Thus, while Whites and Blacks may want their children to do better academically, Black parents may feel a disciplinary approach is the most effective strategy for helping their children.

Surprisingly, scholars have been slow to bridge these lines of study. Specifically, researchers have not linked literature on racial differences in achievement with racial differences in parenting. We take up this issue in the present study and seek to answer two questions: First, to what extent do White and Black parents differ in the responses they are likely to employ when their child's achievement is lower than expected? Second, does academic performance vary by the responses to inadequate performance parents typically employ? We use a longitudinal approach measuring parental responses prior to adolescence and children's academic achievement during adolescence. In doing so, we are able to clarify which types of responses more effectively facilitate academic improvement over time.

Parents and Inadequate Achievement

Although most studies on the role of parents in schooling focus on the link between parental involvement and academic outcomes, a small number of studies within the child development literature suggest that a parental *response to inadequate* academic performance

might have implications for children's academic outcomes. In a well conducted report, Dornbusch and colleagues' (1987) utilized self reports from 7,836 high school students to examine the link between parental behaviors and adolescent performance. Their findings revealed when parents responded to grades with punishment or remained uninvolved, youth had lower grade point averages. However, parents' use of encouragement after viewing their child's grades led to increases in effort and improvement in academic performance. Although Dornbusch's analyses were conducted on longitudinal data, other design issues prohibited them from establishing a clear link between child performance and parental responses.

A related study by Steinberg, Elmen, and Mounts (1989) confirmed the findings of Dornbusch et al.'s using longitudinal data. However, their results were limited by the homogeneity of their sample, which mainly included Whites from middle-class and professional backgrounds. Thus, few studies examine achievement *prospectively* to provide a sense of how the actions parents take lead to certain achievement outcomes. Below we discuss why White and Black parents might differ in the types of responses they are likely to employ when children perform below expectations and the potential impact parental responses to inadequate performance have on children's achievement. However, we first draw on theory from several disciplines to provide context to why parents may choose certain responses over others.

Why Do Parental Responses Differ?

Developing an understanding of why parents have a tendency to respond to inadequate performance in certain ways is challenging given that their responses cannot be assessed in isolation. A host of contextual factors bears on the behavioral choices parents make in this area. These factors range from parents' beliefs about child development, child socialization, and their

role in the child's education. We highlight two theories that provide insight into why some parents may be more likely to adopt certain responses to underperformance: role theory and efficacy theory.

According to role theory, a major factor governing parents' involvement in their child's education is their construction of the parental role (Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler 1997). For example, parents who believe learning is best fostered in environments high in external control (e.g. directives, punishment, demands, etc.) may be apt to construct their parental role around pressuring their child through coercion to attend to their schoolwork. Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1997) note that these types of parents will more likely view their role in their child's schooling affairs as a disciplinarian who reminds them of classroom etiquette rather than one who is actively engaged in their education. However, research suggests that this parental role could lead to inadequate achievement, particularly if a child rebels against harsh parental authority by doing little or inadequate schoolwork (Bronstein, Ginsburg, and Herrera 2005). In contrast, parents who believe children thrive in environments characterized by encouragement, nurturing, and support for the child's curiosity and creativity will believe their role is to develop the child's skills and talents, and to seek the child's opinions through bi-directional communication (Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler 1997).

Efficacy theory informs us that the extent to which parents directly help their children improve academically will likely depend on how capable they feel in this arena. Lareau and Shumar (1996) report such results in their ethnographic study, which revealed dramatic differences in parents' levels of educational skills. A working-class parent in Lareau and Shumar's study, for example, told her nephew that in order to receive help with fractions he would have to wait until his older brother got home. Another parent reported being

“embarrassed” that he could not assist his son with his 3rd-grade homework. In their view, parents have developed perspectives about how best to help their children in school, and these perspectives are heavily influenced by the social resources (e.g. level of education) parents hold. Thus, while the desire to see their child’s achievement improve may be near uniformity among parents, the degree to which they directly help their child improve is likely to be widely variable since parents differ in the amount of expertise they have in this domain.

Racial Differences in Responses

We recognize that the manner in which parents are likely to respond to inadequate achievement will generally reflect their overall parenting style. Since an important dimension of parenting is child socialization, Black and White parents may utilize different parenting practices to prepare their children for unique life challenges. For much of the 20th century theoretical and empirical work posited that the Black family operated under a social deficit model of childrearing. Linking parenting practices of Blacks to slavery and the racial caste system (Davis and Dollard 1940; Frazier 1966), these studies portrayed the Black family as consisting of mothers who were harsh and capricious and fathers who were aloof, violent, and uninterested in child affairs (Kardiner and Ovesey 1951). Indeed, conclusions reached by earlier research suggested that compared to their White counterparts, Black parents expressed low levels of reasoning, were intolerant of child self-expression, and engaged in high levels of power assertion (Baumrind 1972). This view was relatively unchallenged until the end of the 1960s, whereby a famous report by Moynihan (1965) led to an unprecedented amount of research on the Black family beginning in the 1970s.

The family ecology perspective is a theoretical framework useful for understanding racial differences in parents' preferred responses to inadequate achievement. This theory proposes that White and Black families have developed different strategies of childrearing resulting from their respective experiences of living in the U.S. Because Blacks were subjected to longstanding discrimination in this country, they have developed "adaptive strategies" particular to their position within larger society. The adaptive strategies perspective closely parallels socialization theory, which describes the process(es) leading individuals to become actively functioning members of the society in which they live (Elkin and Handel 1984). Taylor, Chatters, Tucker, and Lewis (1990) note that racial socialization is a main feature of socialization for Black parents as they attempt to "prepare their children for the realities of being Black in America" (Taylor et al. 1990: 994). This view highlights the fact that childrearing approaches center on parents' perceptions of the opportunities, dangers, and barriers their children will likely face in society. As Hill (2001) points out, because discrimination remains a reality for some Blacks, these parents may feel a greater need to adopt forceful parenting styles in response to structural forces that undermine their childrearing efforts. Further, since socioeconomic status often fails to protect against racial discrimination, we might expect middle and upper class Black parents to engage in racial socialization.

More recent studies caution against a more parochial conception of Black parents as invariably harsh and suggest that prior evidence claiming Black parents are oriented to punitive parenting styles is overstated (Bluestone and LaMonda 1999). Critics note that many previous examinations of White and Black parenting styles fail to account for the confounding effects of socioeconomic status and ethnicity (e.g. Baumrind 1972). This methodological shortcoming obscures the notion that disciplinary forms of parenting may be prominent among Blacks for a

variety of reasons related to their socioeconomic position in society (e.g., higher incidences of family poverty and lower social status). Furthermore, an extension to the social class argument is that punitive parenting is likely to be used more often among lower socioeconomic parents because the neighborhoods in which lower-class individuals reside often pose elevated risks to children. Parents account for the fact their children are more susceptible for involvement in deviant activities by employing stricter parenting measures (Kelley, Power, and Wimbush 1992; Ogbu 1981). According to this explanation, punitive parenting is a product of social class rather than race.

Potential Impact of Parental Responses

Developmental theorists have hypothesized the link between parental approaches and adolescent achievement operates through or is explained by psychological characteristics governing a child's approach towards academic affairs. For example, Gottfried, Fleming and Gottfried (1998) find that adolescents' intrinsic motivation—characterized by the enjoyment and inherent pleasure in school learning—is fostered in environments which provide optimal challenge, competence-promoting feedback, and support for autonomous behavior. Conversely, environments with more controlling aspects such as those relying on surveillance, often undermine intrinsic motivation (Deci and Ryan 1985). The direction of these findings is consistent with previous research (Ginsburg and Bronstein 1993; Deci and Ryan 1985). Thus, research generally finds that granting autonomy to a child through an emphasis on independence and reasoning rather than punishment is positively associated with children's perceived competence, self-initiated regulation in the classroom, and academic achievement (Grolnick and Ryan 1989; Steinberg, Elmen, and Mounts 1989).

Given that past research suggests racial differences in parenting styles, we should expect racial variation in the typical responses parents employ to inadequate performance. We should also expect that youths' future academic achievement will vary by their parents' responses to inadequate performance. Specifically, we examine the following hypotheses:

***Hypothesis 1a:** Black parents are more likely to employ punitive responses to inadequate academic achievement than White parents.*

***Hypothesis 1b:** Black parents are less likely to employ non-punitive responses to inadequate academic achievement than White parents.*

***Hypothesis 2a:** Children's future academic performance will decline when their parents' likely response to inadequate achievement is punitive.*

***Hypothesis 2b:** Children's future achievement will increase when their parents' likely response to inadequate achievement is non-punitive*

Below we describe the data and analytic plan used in this study to explore these hypotheses.

METHODS

Data

To explore the link between parental responses and academic achievement, we use data from the Child Development Supplement (CDS) of the Panel Study for Income Dynamics (PSID). The PSID began in 1968 as a nationally representative sample of 5,000 American families who were interviewed every year until 1997, after which data collection occurred biannually. Data collection includes members from the original families and families formed by children of initial sample members. In 1997, the PSID added the CDS to address the lack of information on children. Thus, the objective of the CDS was to provide a nationally representative longitudinal database of children and their families to support studies on the dynamic process of early human capital development. The CDS is especially suited to examine the impact of parental responses on children's *future* achievement as it collects test information over two waves which span a total of 6 years.

The first wave (CDS-I) contains 3563 children between the ages of 0-12 sampled from PSID families in 1997. The follow-up wave (CDS-II) was conducted in 2002-2003 among 2908 children whose families remained active in the PSID panel. The children were then between the ages of 5 and 18. To ensure that all children in the sample were in school during both waves of

the CDS, we restrict our sample to children in grades 7-12 in CDS-II (N = 1041). Due to the limited sample on immigrant families and other ethnic groups, we further restrict our analyses to Whites (n = 549) and Blacks (n = 492). We employ a weighting system devised by the PSID staff to account for the effects of the initial probability of being sampled and attrition over time—which is generally low—and incorporates a post-stratification factor to ensure the data are nationally representative (for a detailed description of the CDS weight construction see <http://psidonline.isr.umich.edu/CDS/weightsdoc.html>).

Table 1 contains a detailed description of the measures used in this study. As a basis for assessing Hypothesis 1—racial differences in parents’ likely response to sub-par achievement—we utilize a question from the CDS-I which asked parents how they would respond “if their child brought home a report card with grades or progress that was lower than expected.” We view this as an inclusive measure of parental response to academic underperformance. We recognize that for some parents, inadequate performance can occur if their child scores lower on a test than usual; this circumstance can compel some parents to take action thereby triggering responses they feel are appropriate. Thus, in addition to capturing students who are not doing well in school, it captures those who may be doing well overall but are performing *less* well relative to their usual academic achievement. To assess the link between parental responses and child achievement, we employ children’s reading and math scores on the Woodcock-Johnson Achievement Test. The reading component assesses comprehension, vocabulary, basic skills, phonics, and word attack. The math component assesses children’s proficiency in computation, reasoning, and application of basic skills.

[Table 1 about here]

Analytic Plan

The sample was divided into two groups: those whose parents have a tendency to employ punitive responses to inadequate school achievement and those who do not (non-punitive responses). Within the former group, parents were sorted into three categories; those who 1) punish but do *not* limit their child’s activities, 2) limit their child’s activities but do *not* punish, and 3) *simultaneously* punish and limit activities. The portion of the sample in the non-punitive response group were sorted into five categories; those who 1) contact faculty but do *not* help their child more, 2) help their child more but do *not* contact faculty, 3) *simultaneously* contact faculty and help their child more, 4) engage in closer monitoring and/or encouragement, and 5) are not in any other category.

The analyses begin with logistic regressions of parental response on race to determine whether racial differences exist net of socioeconomic factors such as family income, family structure, parents’ education, and child’s sex, grade in school, and prior reading and math achievement. Odds ratios are reported along with the logistic coefficients in Table 2. Next, the effects of the various parental responses on reading and math achievement are displayed in Table 3. Two models are shown for each outcome. The first model includes only punitive responses to show the effects of the various types of punitive responses relative to non-punitive responses. In the second model, parents who employ punitive responses serve as the reference group by which to assess the effects of the various types of non-punitive responses on achievement. These analyses are repeated in Table 4 using model specifications that allow the estimated effects of parental response to be presented for each group (i.e., Whites, Blacks), such that:

$$\text{Achievement} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 (\text{Black}) + \beta_2 (\text{White} * \text{PS}) + \beta_3 (\text{Black} * \text{PS}) + \beta_4 (\text{SES}) + \beta_5 (\text{Sex}) + \beta_6 (\text{Grade}) + \beta_7 (\text{Prior Achievement}) + e \quad (1)$$

Equation (1) provides separate estimates by race that show whether the effect of parental response (PS) on achievement for each group (i.e., Whites and Blacks) significantly differs from zero. This specification shows which response leads to increases achievement for each group. Whereas β_2 indicates the effect of parental responses for Whites, β_3 indicates the effect of parental responses for Blacks and *not* for Blacks relative to Whites; the difference between β_2 and β_3 is equivalent to the interaction term one would get through traditional multiplicative specification.

RESULTS

Racial Differences in Parental Response to Inadequate Achievement

Do White and Black parents differ in their likely responses to inadequate performance? We examine this question by estimating logistic regressions of parental responses on race. We then transform the logistic coefficients into odds ratios to provide a more substantive interpretation of effects. The first three models in Table 2 show that Black parents are more inclined to employ punitive responses more than White parents. Specifically, they are more likely to punish their child ($b = 1.710$, OR = 5.531), limit their child's activities ($b = .194$, OR = 1.214), and *both* punish and limit their child's activities ($b = 2.406$, OR = 11.091). In contrast, the next three models show Black parents are less likely to employ non-punitive responses than White parents. Blacks are half as likely to contact school faculty ($b = -.707$, OR = .493), two-thirds as likely to provide more help for their child ($b = -.438$, OR = .646), and 31 percent as likely to *both* contact faculty and help their child ($b = -1.173$, OR = .309). There are no racial differences in the likelihood of parents' closer monitoring of child and/or encouragement.

[Table 2 about here]

Effect of Parental Responses on Achievement

Table 3 contains results for the effect of the parents' responses on reading and math achievement. The first model for both reading and math shows that punishment has no effect on achievement. However, relative to children whose parents employ non-punitive responses, those whose parents limit their activities have lower school achievement ($b = -.543$ and -1.074 for reading and math, respectively). Also, simultaneously punishing and limiting activities leads to even larger declines in achievement ($b = -1.845$ and -2.182 for reading and math, respectively). Thus, tendencies to employ punitive responses seem like less effective strategies for addressing inadequate school achievement.

The second model for each outcome shows the effects of the various types of non-punitive responses to inadequate achievement relative to the punitive responses. In general, findings show none of the non-punitive responses lead to a decline in achievement. For reading, students benefit when parents simultaneously contact faculty and provide more help ($b = 1.197$), and when they provide closer monitoring and/or encouragement to work harder ($b = 3.519$). With regard to math achievement, with the exception of parents' increased help, all non-punitive responses lead to an increase in achievement relative to non-punitive responses. Specifically, achievement is higher among children whose parents contact faculty ($b = 3.682$), simultaneously contact faculty and provide more help ($b = .692$), and provide closer monitoring and/or encouragement to work harder ($b = 1.969$). Thus, in contrast to the findings in Model 1, these findings suggest that a non-punitive response to inadequate achievement is more effective for improving academic performance.

[Table 3 about here]

Effect of Parental Responses by Race

Do the responses parents are likely to employ affect the future achievement of White and Black students differently? Table 4 models reading and math achievement as a function of parental response for White and Black students. Superscripts denote which responses significantly differ in their effects between the groups based on traditional interaction terms. The first model for reading shows that whereas punishment has a negative effect for Whites ($b = -2.958$), limiting activities and simultaneously punishing and limiting activities lead to a decline in reading for Blacks ($b = -1.759$ for *limit* and -2.958 for *both punish and limit*). The effects of the latter two responses are greater for Blacks than for Whites. Model 2 shows that neither contacting faculty nor giving more help are effective parental responses for White children's achievement when employed independently. Rather, their achievement increases when these responses are employed in conjunction with one another ($b = .754$). Also, White children benefit from closer monitoring and/or encouragement ($b = 5.148$). With regard to Blacks, reading achievement is higher when parents contact faculty ($b = 6.698$) and simultaneously contact faculty and provide more help ($b = 2.686$). However, closer monitoring and/or encouragement lead to declines in their achievement ($b = -7.519$). Finally, Blacks benefit more than Whites from the three assertive non-punitive responses (i.e., contact faculty, help more, and both contact and help more), and less from the passive non-punitive response (closer monitoring and/or encouragement to work harder).

The findings for math are similar to those for reading. Limiting activities leads to declines in achievement for both groups, though the effect is bigger for Blacks. Whereas simultaneously punishing and limiting activities does not compromise White's achievement,

Blacks experience a decline in achievement when this response is employed. Model 2 shows that contacting faculty and monitoring and/or encouragement are effective responses for Whites ($b = 2.798$ and 2.231 , respectively). However, for Blacks, contacting faculty and helping more are effective responses whether employed separately or in conjunction, and Black students benefit more from these responses than Whites. Finally, monitoring and/or encouragement—the passive non-punitive response—benefits Blacks less relative to Whites.

[Table 4 about here]

DISCUSSION

In this article we examined whether racial differences exist in how parents typically respond to inadequate achievement, and the extent to which these responses impact future reading and math achievement among White and Black adolescents. Our investigation revealed several findings that are relevant for sociological theory and important for educators and policy makers. We offer three main findings.

First, White and Black parents differ markedly in the ways they are likely to respond to inadequate performance. Whereas the modal response for White parents is to become more involved with their child in non-punitive ways, Black parents are more likely to employ disciplinary measures. Smetana and Gaines (1999) present a possible explanation for this finding in their study on conflicts between parents and their adolescent children. When parents must decide how to respond to their child's inadequate performance they are engaging in a form of conflict resolution. Smetana and Gaines's (1999) suggest Black parents tend to view conflicts in terms of respect for parents and obedience to authority. On the other hand, White parents

typically view conflicts as a means for establishing personal jurisdiction, a justification Smetana (1995) labels as a social-cognitive aspect of autonomy development.

Second, whereas a non-punitive parenting response is mainly associated with improvement in reading and math achievement, a punitive response either leads students to perform worse or has no effect. When considered along with the aforementioned findings on racial differences, the implication here is that whereas White parents are likely to respond in ways that increase future achievement, Black parents are drawn towards punitive responses (punish, limit, punish/limit), which are negatively associated with achievement for all adolescents.

Third, the impact of parental responses on future achievement varies by race. Our findings show that Black youths experience greater improvement in reading and math when parents report a greater likelihood for employing non-punitive responses than White youths. Perhaps the most troubling finding reveals that relative to Whites, Blacks' future achievement is *more* negatively impacted when parents report they would limit or they would punish and limit in response to academic performance lower than expected. This is particularly unfortunate because, as previously noted, Black parents are much more likely to employ these responses to inadequate achievement. Given these findings, we revisit the issue of how parents should respond to inadequate achievement and the implications of these findings for the NCLB.

How Should Parents Respond to Inadequate Achievement?

The overall pattern of the current findings shows that children's achievement is negatively impacted by a parenting style that relies on punitive responses. Conversely, non-punitive approaches enhance future performance. When parents use combinations of non-

punitive responses children tend to perform better in reading. However, contacting faculty seems to be the more effective approach for improving math achievement. With respect to race, White and Black children's achievement responds differently even when their parents' responses fall within the same category. The main lesson to take from these overall patterns is that the link between parents' responses and improved academic performance is nuanced. That is, if parents are concerned with helping their child perform better, they must employ the right combination of responses. For instance, Table 4 shows that whereas the more passive non-punitive response of monitoring/encouraging leads to substantial improvement in White children's achievement relative to Blacks, the more assertive non-punitive responses of contacting faculty, helping with schoolwork, and simultaneously contacting and helping are more effective for improving the achievement of Black youths.

Returning to the motivational orientation perspective, it may be that non-punitive strategies are particularly effective because they create an optimal setting under which children can devote more attention to schooling. This setting, void of punitive restrictions on activities, might foster the intrinsic motivation necessary for improved performance (Deci and Ryan 1985). It might be that parents are re-organizing the way children spend their time, for instance, suggesting (rather than explicitly demanding) them to exchange some of the time spent on extracurricular activities for time on activities more essential for academic success. An exchange of this sort may involve spending fewer hours watching television or time alone in recreation, to more time studying with friends or attending after-school classes over the same number of hours. In this way, parents are not using punitive measures to adjust the way their child spends time, which might be the most effective way to motivate children academically.

Conclusion

It must be noted that although Black parents appear to respond in ways that negatively affect their children's future performance, one should not assume they are less concerned with improving academic performance than Whites. While punitive approaches are typically inversely related to more nurturing parent-child relationships, this relationship is not always a one-to-one correlation. Undoubtedly, some parents will be supportive and encouraging while still employing punitive measures. On the one hand, the use of punishment in general is not surprising since parents may feel an obligation to regulate inadequate achievement based on concerns about their child's future. On the other hand, it is surprising that Black parents remain more likely to punish net of family structure, family income, and parental education. While this finding supports the notion that race and class should be distinguished in empirical research, it contrasts with previous findings that attribute punitive parenting styles of Blacks to their lower income-status or incidences of single parenting.

There are both strengths and weaknesses to our measure of parental responses. On the one hand, parents' report of their likely response precludes us from directly relating their behaviors to child academic outcomes. At the same time, since the question is about expected response, it is likely to be a more reliable reflection of parents' normal parenting approach. It represents an implicit control for behavior "shocks" that could arise if a stressor such as a loss of job or unforeseen financial hardship occurred concomitantly with inadequate performance. An additional strength is that asking parents such a hypothetical means the structure of the question reduces the probability of parents falsifying about their actual behavior. A stronger sense of stigma may reside over parents' responses if they were asked, "Have you ever punished your child for inadequate performance?" rather than being asked their *likelihood* of engaging in

several types of responses to their child's performance.

We recognize that punishment can take numerous forms. For instance, parents who respond with punishment could excoriate children for inadequate achievement or use physical discipline. The CDS does not disaggregate punishment in response to inadequate school achievement. However, we conducted supplemental analyses using data from the Maryland Adolescent Development in Context Study (MADICS), which was developed for understanding psychological determinants of behavior and developmental trajectories and contains numerous forms of parental punishment in response to inadequate achievement. While there were no racial differences in yelling, Blacks threaten, physically punish, ground, and withhold rewards more than Whites when their children perform inadequately in school (*results available upon request*).

Our analysis of parents' responses to inadequate achievement highlights the importance of understanding parent-child dynamics with regard to education outcomes. The No Child Left Behind Initiative (NCLB) calls for schools to increase levels of parental involvement by implementing programs to involve parents in ways that promote academic success. Yet, perhaps NCLB has overlooked strategies parents can employ at home to increase achievement. The present findings suggest the effects of the NCLB mandate might be different depending on which type of parental involvement is encouraged. This study could inform policy makers and school personnel of the variation in parental responses to children's achievement and some implications this has for improving achievement. It also provides some suggestion on which responses should be encouraged and which should be avoided, particularly by parents whose children are targeted by NCLB for inadequate achievement.

We believe the examination of the link between parental responses and future achievement is in its early stages. Further research directives are warranted. Researchers and

policy makers should comprehensively explore dimensions in which parents can help children succeed academically. Additionally, findings from this study could be greatly enhanced by qualitative analyses aimed at providing greater depth to each parental response measure. Such studies could reveal the underlying sentiment parents have when enacting a given response or reduce the uncertainty in interpretation of response categories between parents and researchers, a consistent problem of survey research. Additional research should also explore this topic using other racial-ethnic groups such as Asian Americans and Hispanics.

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TABLE 1. Means, Standard Deviations, and Descriptions for Variables Used in the Analysis: CDS '97 & '02

Variable Name	Description	Metric	Means (SD) By Race	
			Whites	Blacks
<i>Educational Outcomes (CDS-II): Each of the following subscales are from the Woodcock-Johnson Achievement Test</i>				
Reading	Summation of the Letter-Word and Passage Comprehension scores.	0 - 193	108.98 (18.79)	93.29 (17.48)
Math	Summation of the Calculation and Applied Problems scores.	49 - 171	108.51 (15.28)	95.23 (13.74)
<i>Parental Response to Inadequate Achievement (CDS-I)</i>				
<i>If (child) brought home a report card with grades or progress lower than expected, would you be likely to:</i>				
1) Punitive Responses				
Punish	Punish (child).	0 = Not very likely 1 = Very likely	.01 (.08)	.07 (.26)
Limit	Limit or reduce (child's) non-school activities.	0 = Not very likely 1 = Very likely	.26 (.44)	.30 (.46)
Punish & Limit	Both punish and limit activities.	0 = Not very likely 1 = Very likely	.02 (.14)	.24 (.43)
2) Non-Punitive Responses				
Contact Faculty	Contact (his/her) teacher or principal.	0 = Not very likely 1 = Very likely	.10 (.30)	.05 (.21)
Help More	Spend more time helping (child) with schoolwork.	0 = Not very likely 1 = Very likely	.18 (.38)	.13 (.34)
Contact & Help More	Both contact faculty and help more.	0 = Not very likely 1 = Very likely	.33 (.47)	.13 (.33)
Monitor and/or Encourage	Keep a close eye on (child's) activities <i>and/or</i> tell child to spend more time on schoolwork.	0 = Not very likely 1 = Very likely	.06 (.24)	.04 (.19)
Other	None of the above responses.	0 = Not very likely 1 = Very likely	.04 (.20)	.04 (.19)
<i>Prior Achievement: Each of the following subscales are from the Woodcock-Johnson Achievement Test</i>				
Reading	Summation of the Letter-Word and Passage Comprehension scores.	42 - 163	112.01 (15.79)	98.73 (14.67)
Math	Summation of the Calculation and Applied Problems scores.	33 - 184	111.99 (17.65)	100.70 (15.09)
N's =			549	492

TABLE 2. Logistic Regressions of Parental Response on Race

Ind. Vars.	<i>Punitive Responses</i>				<i>Non-Punitive Responses</i>									
	Punish	Limit	Punish & Limit	Contact	Help	Contact & Help	Monitor/Encourage	Other						
	b	(OR)	b	(OR)	b	(OR)	b	(OR)	b	(OR)	b	(OR)		
<i>Race</i>														
Black	1.710*** (.144)	.194*** (.048)	1.214 (.084)	2.406*** (.084)	11.091 (.097)	.493 (.097)	-7.07*** (.097)	-4.38*** (.062)	.646 (.060)	-1.173*** (.060)	.309 (.105)	-.186 (.105)	.830 (.124)	-.194 (.124)
Constant	-2.708*** (.618)	.164 (.187)	-2.063*** (.387)	-5.513** (.312)	-2.235 (.219)	-1.519*** (.192)	-4.768*** (.364)	-4.727*** (.457)						
χ^2 , df	797, 13	560, 13	1956, 13	594, 13	302, 13	1116, 13	271, 13	737, 13						

Note: Numbers in parentheses are standard errors. White is the reference category for race. Models are net of family income, family structure, parents' education, sex, grade in school, and prior reading and math achievement. Number of observations are 1041.

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$ (two-tailed tests)

Table 3. Parental Response to Inadequate School Achievement in Reading and Math

Ind. Variables	Reading		Math	
	(1)	(2)	(1)	(2)
<i>Punitive</i>				
Punish	-.316 (.782)	---	-.381 (.665)	---
Limit	-.543* (.253)	---	-1.074*** (.215)	---
Punish and Limit	-1.845*** (.482)	---	-2.182*** (.409)	---
<i>Non-Punitive</i>				
Contact Faculty	---	.433 (.418)	---	3.682*** (.355)
Help More	---	-.527 (.326)	---	.154 (.277)
Contact & Help	---	1.197*** (.284)	---	.692** (.242)
Monitor/Encourage	---	3.519*** (.489)	---	1.969*** (.416)
Other	---	-.616 (.593)	---	2.420*** (.505)
Constant	11.491*** (1.146)	11.093*** (1.143)	53.867*** (.942)	53.578*** (.937)
R ²	.484	.486	.435	.438

Notes: Number of observations for all models is 987. Models are net of race, parental education, family income, family structure, sex, grade in school, and prior reading/math achievement.

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$ (two-tailed tests)

Table 4. Parental Response to Inadequate School Achievement on Reading and Math by Race

Ind. Variables	Reading		Math	
	(1)	(2)	(1)	(2)
<i>Punitive for Whites</i>				
Punish	-2.958*	---	-1.981	---
Limit	-.270	---	-.780***	---
Punish and Limit	-.202	---	4.614***	---
<i>Punitive for Blacks</i>				
Punish	.042	---	-.170	---
Limit	-1.759** ^a	---	-2.800*** ^a	---
Punish and Limit	-2.958*** ^a	---	-5.666*** ^a	---
<i>Non-Punitive for Whites</i>				
Contact Faculty	---	-.611	---	2.798***
Help More	---	-1.120**	---	-.603
Contact & Help	---	.754*	---	-.100
Monitor/Encourage	---	5.148***	---	2.231***
Other	---	-2.128***	---	.813
<i>Non-Punitive for Blacks</i>				
Contact Faculty	---	6.698*** ^a	---	7.414*** ^a
Help More	---	1.230 ^a	---	2.139*** ^a
Contact & Help	---	2.686*** ^a	---	4.025*** ^a
Monitor/Encourage	---	-7.519*** ^a	---	-1.872 ^a
Other	---	5.555*** ^a	---	8.453*** ^a
Constant	8.188	10.900***	54.030***	54.345***
R ²	.484	.491	.439	.441

Notes: Number of observations for all models is 1041. Models are net of race, parental education, family income, family structure, sex, grade in school, and prior reading/math achievement.

^a Denotes significantly different from Whites.

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$ (two-tailed tests)