Why parenting matters for children in the 21st century: An evidence-based framework for understanding parenting and its impact on child development

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Acknowledgements

Abstract

This paper provides a structured overview of the existing parenting literature with the aim of developing an evidence-based and culture-sensitive framework of parenting and its influence on child development. The paper outlines how changes in the 21st century have altered family life and summarises evidence from 29 meta-studies and 81 quantitative studies for the developmental impact of different parenting styles and dimensions. Overall, results suggest that warm parenting that provides children with age-appropriate autonomy and structure is key for a healthy and prosperous development of children and adolescents across various domains. The parenting approach adopted by parents but also its effect varies and the paper points to various contextual (e.g. culture, socio-economic factors, support within the community and family) and individual (e.g. gender, personality and health condition of children and parents) factors explaining these variations. The paper discusses how a systematic consideration of such factors not only sharpens the scientific understanding of parenting and its impact but also helps improving family policies and support.

Résumé

Ce document fournit un aperçu structuré de la littérature existante sur la parentalité, dans le but de développer un cadre de parentalité fondé sur des preuves et respectant les spécificités culturelles et son incidence sur le développement de l'enfant. Le rapport décrit comment le 21e siècle a modifié la vie de famille et synthétise les résultats de 29 méta-études et 81 études quantitatives sur le développement des différents styles et aspects que revêt la parentalité et les répercussions potentielles pour l'enfant. Dans l'ensemble, les résultats suggèrent que la parentalité bienveillante qui offre aux enfants une autonomie et une structure adaptées à leur âge est la clé d'un développement sain et prospère des enfants et des adolescents dans divers domaines. Tant l'approche parentale adoptée par les parents que son incidence sont variables et le document met en évidence divers facteurs contextuels (par exemple, la culture, les facteurs socio-économiques, le soutien au sein de la communauté et de la famille) et individuels (par exemple le sexe, la personnalité et l'état de santé des enfants et des parents) expliquant ces variations. Le document explique comment une prise en compte systématique de ces facteurs affine non seulement la compréhension scientifique de la parentalité et ses répercussions, mais contribue également à améliorer les politiques et soutien familial.

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1. Introduction

Understanding today's nature of childhood requires an understanding of parenting in the 21st century. Parents and caregivers fundamentally shape children's lives and everyday experiences, which has a major impact on their cognitive, academic and socio-emotional development (Bornstein, 2019[1]; Skinner, Johnson and Snyder, 2005[2]). They also have a major impact on children's health and well-being.

Parenting now, as in the past, is challenging and demanding. Family life has changed over the years, bringing about new challenges for parents and the question if the way children are raised should change as well (Zahran, 2011[3]; Burns and Gottschalk, 2019[4]). Unsurprisingly, many parents are uncertain how to master the parenting challenge (Dworkin, Connell and Doty, 2013[5]; Radey and Randolph, 2009[6]). Today, a wide variety of support services and information about parenting are offered offline as well as online (digital platforms, blogs, campaigns, parenting programmes and other services).

Yet, parenting programmes and other support services are implemented and run by a large variety of actors (Daly, 2013[7]). Particularly in countries where private, commercial providers cover huge shares of provision, cost and quality may vary substantially and not all offers may live up to their promise (Institute of Behavioral Science, 2020[8]; Haslam, 2016[9]). Parents may feel overwhelmed by the array of programmes offered and unsure about the best choice. For governments and local authorities, on the other hand, it may be difficult to decide how to best support parents, for instance, which parenting approach to promote through services and how to address best the needs and worries of 21st century parents.

Many parents turn to the Internet or parenting books and may get lost and confused by the sheer endless number of parenting approaches advocated for and warned against, from holistic and attachment parenting to hothousing and buddy parenting (Burns and Gottschalk, 2019[4]). Taking a look at the sphere of available information reveals a confusing range of advertised parenting approaches with little or no evidence, on the one hand, and approaches that are well-established and researched, on the other hand. This paper, therefore, provides a structured overview of the existing scientific parenting literature. Since ensuring a healthy and prosperous development of children is a primary concern of parents, policy-makers and professionals alike, this paper aims at developing an evidence-based framework for understanding parenting and its influence on child development. The paper focuses on the relatively global, consistent, and stable approaches to child rearing across situations and domains as they are considered key for predicting child outcomes (Rodrigo, Byrne and Rodríguez, 2014[10]; Smetana, 2017[11]). Within this paper, the term "**parenting approach**" refers to:

- **Parenting dimensions,** which capture general characteristics of parents' approach to child rearing. Parental warmth, for example, describes parent-child-interactions as warm, comforting and sensitive.

- **Parenting styles,** which describe the parenting approach along different dimensions. The authoritative parenting style, for instance, refers to parenting that is warm, loving and sets clear expectations for children's behaviour.

The paper begins by outlining how family life and parenting has changed in the 21st century. It then takes stock of the ways researchers have described variations in parenting approach with parenting dimensions and parenting styles and how such variations can be explained by contextual and individual factors (section 2). The question about the developmental impact of the different parenting approaches will be addressed in the following section 3.

The last section proposes a framework that synthesises the evidence on parenting, its impact and influencing factors (section 4), which is then used to derive implications for policy, practice and research.

1.1. 21st Century Changes for parents and families

Over the last half century the world has changed fundamentally, causing shift in expectations and experiences of how parents raise their children (Faircloth, 2014[12]; Hayford, Guzzo and Smock, 2014[13]). In the last two decades rates of fertility and marriage decreased, whereas the rates of divorce and numbers of single parent households increased (OECD, 2011[14]). Same-sex marriage is becoming increasingly legalised across OECD countries (OECD, 2016[15]). Consequently, family forms and living arrangements have diversified with an increase of unmarried or divorced families, single and same-sex parents. Most children, both within OECD countries and beyond, live with two parents (whether biological, step, adoptive or foster, married or unmarried), with an average of 17% children under 18 living with one parent in 2017 (Miho and Thévenon, 2020[16]; UN DESA, 2019[17]). As family stability has decreased, many children experience different family living arrangements throughout their childhood and many children move from one household to another on a regular basis due to shared custody arrangements.

Parents are often older, better educated and tend to have fewer children (Hayford, Guzzo and Smock, 2014[13]; Bongaarts, Mensch and Blanc, 2017[18]). More mothers work while raising their children (Miho and Thévenon, 2020[16]). Moreover, migration has led to unprecedented ethnic, cultural and religious diversity within many societies.

In modernised societies many families feel disconnected from their neighbourhoods and communities (OECD, 2016[15]; Zahran, 2011[3]). This has weakened the informal social support and safety net for a lot of families, requiring more families to assume full responsibility for their children's welfare, rather than relying on the extended family and community as a whole to join in the oversight, protection, and nurturing of children (Pimentel, 2016[19]).

Today's parents, however, receive greater public support. Governments and municipalities increasingly focus on parenting in public provision and policy (Daly et al., 2015[20]), despite the fact that raising children is still essentially a private matter and parents - within legal restrictions – have a lot of freedom in raising children. In many countries schools and early childhood education and care facilities have increased their provision and also their work with parents. Often families not only receive financial support but are also offered information and hands-on support through different initiatives and parenting programmes (Rodrigo, 2010[21]; Daly et al., 2015[20]). At the same time, parenting support has developed into a lucrative market. Forbes, for instance, estimates the 2019 market size of "the new mom economy" (i.e. apps, gadgets, products and services for first-time Millennial parents with a child under the age of one) at USD 46 billion (Klich, 2019).

Globalisation and technology have exponentially increased the competition and uncertainty in the labour market. Technology has introduced further changes to family life, modifying the way family members interact. In the digital era, parents can seek and exchange support and information more easily than ever (Radey and Randolph, 2009[6]). Millennial parents seem to prefer to consult the Internet and social media before seeing a professional offline or asking family members or neighbours (İlknur Külhaş Çelik, 2019[22]; Setyastuti et al., 2019[23]).

However, with more parents turning to digital platforms, chat groups and other less regulated channels as primary sources for information and support, new challenges emerge. Parents, especially insecure parents, have always been an easy target for

misinformation and manipulation and while false and fabricated information are far from new, the "complexity and scale of information pollution in our digitally-connected world presents an unprecedented challenge" (Wardle and Derakhshan, 2017, p. 10[24]). A massive amount of information is shared by different actors - not all parenting experts - and with an honest interest in helping struggling or insecure parents. The desire to distort information for political, social or economic gain always existed but digital content gets reproduced and amplified at an unbelievable speed (Humprecht, Esser and Van Aelst, 2020[25]).

Unsurprisingly, parents report suffering from such information pollution (Özgür, 2016[26]). It seems almost impossible to escape public debates about the relative benefits and harms of different parenting approaches (see Box 1.1). They are captured in a myriad of ubiquitous stories, parenting help books, blogs, and articles. Debates are often polarised without any evidence or with evidence selectively cited. Colourful, descriptive labels are used such as "Free-Range Kids", or "Buddy Parents" to heat up debates and underline positions (Tremblay et al., 2015[27]). Counterbalancing such heated public debates and insecurities attached to it, requires a thorough evaluation of the current evidence base on parenting.

Box 1.1. Parenting debates and myths in the public sphere

A number of debates over parenting approaches are being played out in the popular media, blogosphere and parenting books. Taking a look at the sphere of available information reveals a confusing range of advertised parenting approaches with little or no evidence, on the one hand, and approaches that are well-established and researched, on the other hand. To push sales numbers for books and clicks for online posts and to mobilise public opinion, colourful labels are often used, parenting approaches are condemned as "deadly" (Borba, 2009, p. XXii[28]) or "dangerous" (Courtney, 2008[29]) and putative outcomes of various approaches for children's development and well-being are listed.

For example, "Buddy Parenting" (i.e. parents avoid conflict and are lax on boundaries and limits out of an urge to be buddies and friends more than parents) supposedly create "the most spoiled and ill-behaved generation ever" (Borba, 2009, p. XXii[28]). The terms "Free-range Kids and Parents" are used to discuss whether it is necessary to let children walk in the nature, play outside, ride public transport with limited parental supervision (Vota, 2017[30]; Pimentel, 2016[19]). This is then justified with the goal of promoting self-sufficiency and independency. It, however, reflects more an emotionally loaded dispute about parents' rights and confusing legislations regarding child neglect than a serious scientific debate (Luciano, 2019). An overview of publicly advertised styles and their assumed impact on child development is provided by Burns and Gottschalk (2019[4]).

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2. Overview of research on parenting approaches

2.1. Capturing variations in parenting approaches

Debates about how best to describe and study parenting and its impact on child development are ongoing. Parenting is a complex task that involves many specific actions that both in conjunction with and individually influence child development (Rodrigo, Byrne and Rodríguez, 2014[10]). Much of the scientific literature, however, suggests that specific actions of parents are in general less important than the general approach to

parenting in predicting child outcomes (Rodrigo, Byrne and Rodríguez, 2014[10]; Smetana, 2017[11]). Bearing that in mind, research has focused for decades on global, consistent, and stable approaches to child rearing across situations and domains, instead of looking at specific behaviours (see Box 2.1). Therefore, these approaches built the centre of a parenting framework. Two approaches can be broadly differentiated: a *categorical approach* that categorises parenting approaches into different styles and a *dimensional approach* that describes parenting approaches along various dimensions.

Box 2.1. Parenting behaviours and flexibility in parenting approach

Parenting behaviours: How does the parenting approach relate to what parents actually do?

Parenting styles and dimensions are related to parenting behaviours but broader, reflecting an approach to child rearing across situations and domains (Power et al., 2013[31]). They create the emotional climate in which parents' behaviour is expressed (Rodrigo, Byrne and Rodríguez, 2014[10]). In contrast, parenting behaviours are the discrete, observable acts of parenting. They encompass what parents actually do (e.g. spank, hug, praise, feedback, reward, punishment, reasoning, limit setting, etc.) in concrete child-rearing situations.

It is assumed that the effect of parenting styles and dimensions on child outcomes is explained through their impact on specific behaviours (i.e. their effect is mediated through parenting behaviours). For example, parents with an authoritative parenting style may be less likely to have obese children because they use authoritative feeding behaviours (e.g. reasoning, suggestions, and providing choices) (Power et al., 2013[31]).

Parenting flexibility: How do parents reach different goals and meet varying demands?

A certain flexibility in parenting approaches is considered a positive feature (Brassell et al., 2016[32]; Rodrigo, Byrne and Rodríguez, 2014[10]). Within a given style, parents may employ a variety of behaviours when dealing with their children to meet different goals and the varying demands of situations.

For instance, parents' response to children's misbehaviour varies depending on the rules and standards that children disobeyed (Smetana, 1994[33]): When a child's misbehaviour involves harm to self or others, violation of others' rights, fairness or conventional rules (e.g. bad table manners, coming home late) parents usually use more reasoning and explanations than in situations involving disruptive or inappropriate violations of social norms. In these situations parents tend to use power assertive techniques (i.e. unexplained commands and punishment).

Another example of how situation-specific goals shape parenting behaviour was presented published by Grolnick (2002[34]): A learning situation where parents knew the result was tested afterwards resulted in more controlling behaviour of parents. Naturally, generally more controlling parents were most prone to exert pressure on children in such situations. Parents may, also, be overly involved in one aspect of their child's life (e.g. academics) with little interest for others (e.g. social development) (Garst and Gagnon, 2015[35]). Yet, variability may sometimes also result from skills that parents lack in certain domains or situations, instead of being a sign of flexibility (Grusec and Davidov, 2010[36]).

2.1.1. Categorical approach – How can parenting be described using typologies?

A very popular approach categorises parenting into different styles (Maccoby and Martin, 1983[37]; Pinquart, 2016[38]). By far most influential remains a model that describes parenting styles along two orthogonal dimensions:

- **Parental responsiveness** describes the quality of parent-child interactions as accepting, supportive, sensitive, and warm.

- **Parental demandingness**, on the other hand, characterises the quality of parental discipline and control as consistent and demanding children's maturity.

Figure 2.1. Classical parenting styles

With the two dimensions of responsiveness and demandingness parents are categorised into four parenting styles.
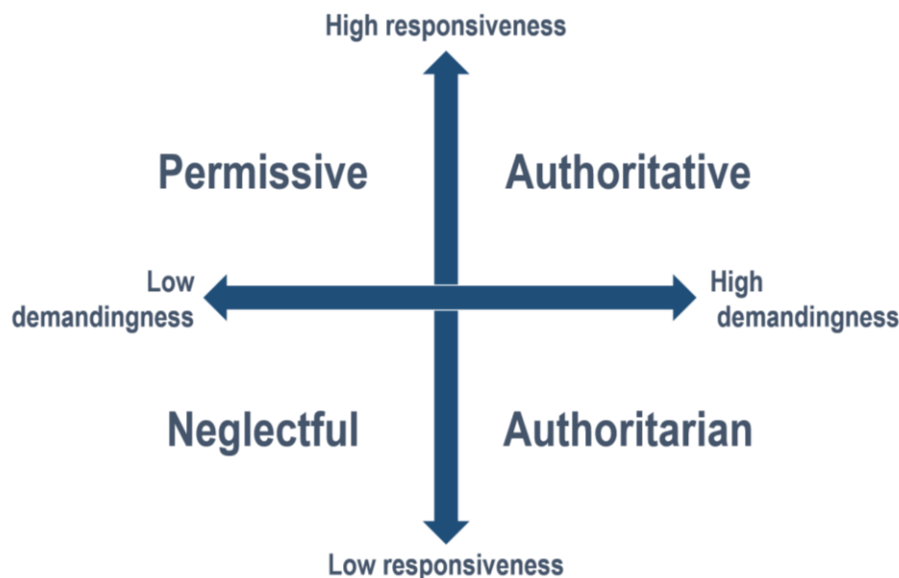
Source: Adapted based on Maccoby and Martin (1983[37]).

Using these dimensions, the classical parenting style framework distinguishes four styles (Baumrind, 1971[39]; Baumrind, Larzelere and Owens, 2010[40]; Maccoby and Martin, 1983[37]):

- **Authoritative parents** are both demanding and responsive. They set clear, reasonable rules and directives that are in line with children's abilities. Though firm in their enforcement, authoritative parents explain their positions and are willing to discuss expectations. At the same time, they are warm, loving and responsive to children's needs.

- **Authoritarian parents** are demanding but not responsive. They expect obedience to high standards and strict rules without considering children's needs. Authoritarian parents tend to be rigid and inflexible. They discourage any interactive dialogue and have rather distant, cold relationships with their children.

- **Permissive parents** (sometimes called indulgent parents) are responsive yet not demanding. These parents are warm, and usually very accepting of their children's

impulses and attuned to their needs. They make few demands, provide little direction and guidance and do often not expect compliance with rules or standards.

- **Neglectful parents** (sometimes referred to as uninvolved parents) are neither demanding nor responsive. They are often disengaged from their children's lives, have no expectations for their children's behaviour and offer little supervision, affection and support.

It is generally assumed that authoritative parenting is most beneficial for child development, whereas authoritarian as well as permissive styles are seen as having less favourable outcomes (Rose et al., 2018[41]; Smetana, 2017[11]). Neglectful parenting, in particular, is considered harmful for children. These general conclusions remain, however, controversial (further explained in section 3).

It is further debated whether a dimensional approach is not more informative, i.e. deconstructing the different styles into their composing elements to study their unique, independent effects on child development (Power, 2013[42]).

2.1.2. Dimensional approach – How can parenting be described using key dimensions?

The dimensional approach uses parenting dimensions as descriptors of the parenting approach (Skinner, Johnson and Snyder, 2005[2]; Power et al., 2013[31]). In contrast to parenting styles, which describes the parenting approach along different dimensions and, thus, their combined effect on child development, the dimensional approach allows for identifying the specific contribution of individual parenting strategies (e.g. monitoring and warmth) (Power, 2013[42]; Elsaesser et al., 2017[43]). Another advantage is that, instead of splitting approaches into distinct categories, all variations along the parenting continuum (e.g. from less warm to very warm parenting) are considered.

Key dimensions of need-supportive parenting

Despite differences (see Box 2.2), research seems to converge on three dimensions key for parenting children from preschool to late adolescence (Bornstein, 2019[1]; Skinner, Johnson and Snyder, 2005[2]):

- **Parental warmth** describes parent-child-interactions as warm, comforting and sensitive.

- **Parental autonomy support** characterises the degree of psychological freedom that parents allow their children by taking their perspective into account, providing choices and encouraging children's initiative.

- **Parental structure** relates to the expression of clear expectations for behaviour while at the same time providing support and positive, process-oriented feedback whenever needed.

According to the self-determination theory (see Box 2.2), parents with high levels of parental warmth, autonomy support and parental structure nurture childrens' and adolescents' three basic psychological needs for relatedness (feeling connected to others, having caring relationships and belonging to a community), autonomy (psychological freedom, authenticity and ownership of own behaviour and choices) and competence (sense of mastery and efficacy, feeling capable to accomplish projects and achieve own goals). These needs are universal and essential for individual growth and well-being across the lifespan (Bornstein, 2019[1]).

> **Box 2.2. Self-determination theory as a theoretical framework for research on parenting dimensions**
>
> **Empirical-driven line of research**
>
> Over half a century ago, Schaefer identified three core parenting dimensions (Schaefer, 1965[44]; Schaefer, 1965[45]; Schaefer, 1959[46]): acceptance versus rejection, psychological autonomy versus psychological control and firm control versus lax control. His approach can be described as bottom-up and empirically driven because he administered a large number of items relating to parenting to adolescents and young adults and analysed the factor structure underlying their responses. Following on from this, many studies used a similar approach replicating the three dimensional structure, though using different labels (see Table 2.1 and (Skinner, Johnson and Snyder, 2005[2]) for overviews).
>
> **Theory-driven line of research**
>
> In more recent years, several researchers have urged for a more top-down theory-driven approach. In particular, self-determination theory, a theory well-established in many fields including education, was increasingly used as an overarching theoretical framework to structure research (Bornstein, 2019[1]; Van Petegem et al., 2015[47]; Soenens and Vansteenkiste, 2010[48]). Despite conceptual differences, the correspondence between the dimensions derived by both approaches are striking. In addition, self-determination theory allows for assumptions about the impact of the various dimensions on child development and well-being. Taken together, self-determination theory can serve as an overarching theoretical framework to structure the evidence from both research lines.

Table 2.1 provides an overview of the three parenting dimensions, showing their large correspondence with one of the three basic needs. Notwithstanding, every dimension is relevant for all needs to some extent: Autonomy-supportive parents, for example, who leave study choices up to their children are not only nurturing adolescents' need for autonomy but at the same time signal acceptance of who they are as a person (relatedness) and trust in their ability to make appropriate choices (competence).

Table 2.1. Overview of the three key dimensions of parenting

Need-supportive and need-thwarting parenting along the three basic psychological needs

Need-supportive parenting	Warmth	Autonomy support	Structure
Definition	Parents' interactions with their children are warm and affectionate. They show sensitivity to children's distress and provide adequate support and comfort to alleviate any distress.	Taking the child's frame of reference and creating opportunities for children to experience psychological freedom. Parents acknowledge children's perspective, provide choices and encourage initiative. Rules are introduces with a meaningful rationale.	Parents express clear expectations for behaviour, provide support and positive, process-oriented feedback when needed.
Related constructs	Parental support, responsiveness, involvement, acceptance, love, approval, closeness, connection	Freedom, democratic parenting, non-directive, psychological autonomy	Regulation, behavioural control, demandingness, firm control, supervision, rule-setting, assertive control
Parenting task	Love and care	Promotion of autonomy	Guidance and regulation
Children's need	Need for relatedness	Need for autonomy	Need for competence
Need-thwarting parenting	**Rejection**	**Pressure**	**Chaos**
Definition	Parents are cold, aloof and ignoring in their interactions with their children. They show no sensitivity to their child's calls for support.	Parents are pressuring and domineering. They impose their own agenda on the child with pressuring, intrusive and manipulative behaviours.	Parents are either unpredictable and unclear about their expectations for children's behaviours and goals or they are extremely lenient without setting any rules or limits. Parents may also undermine children's accomplishments and performance with constant criticism.
Related constructs	Deprecating, hostility, harsh parenting, disapproval, negativity, derogation, aversion, dislike	Intrusive control, strict control, restrictiveness, controllingness **Internal pressure:** psychological control[a] **External pressure:** harsh, physical discipline; coercive control	Under-controlled parenting, inconsistent discipline, non-directive parenting, lax control, unpredictable, non-contingent parenting.

Note: a.) Psychological control is here narrowly defined (see Soenen and Beyers (2012[49]) for a broader definition).
Source: Developed based on several key papers (Soenens and Beyers, 2012[49]; Skinner, Johnson and Snyder, 2005[2]; Bornstein, 2019[1]; Soenens and Vansteenkiste, 2010[48]).

Key dimensions of need-thwarting parenting

Parents, as well as other key figures (such as teachers, relatives and friends) can nurture but also thwart psychological needs (see also Table 2.1) (Skinner, Johnson and Snyder, 2005[2]; Bornstein, 2019[1]):

- **Parental rejection** describes parents' interactions with their children as hostile, negative and disapproving.

- **Parental pressure** relates to parents who are intrusive and restrictive with a demand of strict obedience.

- **Parental chaos** refers to parenting that is inconsistent, unpredictable, arbitrary, or, in general, without means to ends.

While studies did not systematically address both sides of the parenting dimensions, self-determination theory underlines that need-thwarting parenting is not the same as unsupportive parenting: For example, pressuring children or adolescence to do things against their will can result in autonomy frustration, pointing to children's' failures and inferiority to competence frustration and displaying hostility and aversion towards children to relatedness frustration. Conversely, parents who provide low warmth, structure and autonomy might evoke need dissatisfaction in their children but not necessarily active need frustration.

Using self-determination theory to distinguish different types of parental control

Using self-determination theory as a parenting framework additionally allows for structuring the diverse concepts and terminologies used in research on parenting dimensions. For instance, a majority of studies examine the distinct implications of behavioural versus psychological control for child development. *Behavioural control* includes communicating standards and clear, consistent expectations as well as providing and enforcing rules through supervision and monitoring (Sorkhabi and Middaugh, 2014[50]; Baumrind, Larzelere and Owens, 2010[40]). Hence, it can be understood as a parental effort to provide structure. *Psychological control,* on the other hand, refers to internal pressuring methods (e.g. shaming children and inducing guilt) and conditional approval (e.g. through withholding and withdrawing love) to impose parents' own agenda (Smetana, 2017[11]). As this type of parenting undermines children's need for autonomy, it belongs to the dimension of parental pressure. Equally often discussed in research are aspects of *coercive control,* such as verbal hostility (e.g. threats) and harsh, physical discipline, which also thwarts autonomy needs by exerting external pressure on children and adolescents (Sorkhabi and Middaugh, 2014[50]; Baumrind, Larzelere and Owens, 2010[40]).

2.1.3. 21st Century parenting - How can modern parenting be described?

Family life has changed in the last half century with potential implications for parents' approaches to raising children (as discussed in section 1). Classic parenting styles and dimensions still seem to adequately describe contemporary parenting (Dehue et al., 2012[51]; Garcia et al., 2019[52]; Calafat et al., 2014[53]). Notwithstanding, scholars discuss a general shift in more industrialised countries away from authoritarian parenting towards more authoritative parenting (Doepke and Zilibotti, 2014[54]; Bray and Dawes, 2016[55]). Pointing in that direction, Doepke and Zilibotti (2014[54]) showed for the United States a decrease in parents' approval of corporal punishment with time, that was even more pronounced among higher educated parents: While spanking was nearly universally approved in the late 1960s, now almost half of the highly educated (with a B.A. degree or higher) disapproved. Similar declines in slapping and parental pressure (i.e. demanding

strict obedience from the child) were observed for Sweden, though in rather small samples (Trifan, Stattin and Tilton-Weaver, 2014[56]). Conversely, Park and Lau found in a trend comparison for 90 countries (from 1981 to 2008) that parents increasingly valued children's obedience but only in less developed countries (lower gross national income per capita and lower percentage of postsecondary education enrolment) (2016[57]). At the same time, parents saw a higher value in fostering children's autonomy in those countries. Collishaw and colleagues (2012[58]) reported for the same period an increase in family quality time and parental control in England. A parenting framework needs to take account of such important shifts in parenting.

The rise of an intensive parenting era?

More recently, intensive parenting or the over-involvement of parents in children's lives has received much public attention (LeMoyne and Buchanan, 2011[59]; Nomaguchi and Milkie, 2020[60]). Scholars have argued that this is a general trend in contemporary parenting (Doepke and Zilibotti, 2014[54]; Ishizuka, 2019[61]). Trend data on this is missing but Dotti and colleagues (2016[62]) reported for Western countries a general increase in the hours parents spent on childcare from 1965 into the 21st century (see also Doepke and Zilibotti (2014[54])), in particular for higher educated parents. Additionally, Craig and colleagues (2014[63]) observed that Australian parents use the time with their children more intensively (by engaging in conversations, teaching, reading and playing games with the children, putting them to bed and accompanying and transporting them to school and other appointments etc.).

Without doubt, research on intensive parenting has increased (Tremblay et al., 2015[27]). While more parental involvement has traditionally been assumed to be positive, contemporary scientific discussions imply that there may be a point where parental effort gets too much and counterproductive for child development (Locke, 2014[64]; Locke, Campbell and Kavanagh, 2012[65]). Research from the *categorical approach* looked at various hyper-parenting styles, in particular among (upper) middle class parents, including:

- **Concerted-cultivating parents** attempt to stimulate children's development deliberately whenever they can (Carolan and Wasserman, 2015[66]; Janssen, 2015[67]), for instance by incorporating structured leisure activities in their children's lives to foster their talents. They may also have extensive conversations with their children (often about school) that are rich in vocabulary and grammatically complex. These parents use the "day-to-day business" to teach their children how to negotiate, as well as analyse and justify choices. They are overly involved in school, advocating for teachers' particular attention towards their child.

- **Helicopter parents** hover over their children, excessively shield them and problem-solve for them (Garst and Gagnon, 2015[35]; Segrin et al., 2012[68]). These parents apply hyper-involved and developmentally inappropriate strategies to protect their children and to ensure their success. This ultimately prevents children from assuming responsibility for their own choices (Bradley-Geist and Olson-Buchanan, 2014[69]; Segrin et al., 2012[68]).

- **Tiger parents** exert heavy control on children and a restrictive, punitive style of discipline, including coercive tactics and shaming, as a mean to promote success (Supple and Cavanaugh, 2013[70]; Sovet and Metz, 2014[71]). They are also loving and warm but do not accept any discussions (Kim et al., 2013[72]). Tiger parents, push their children to be exceptional, especially in school and in extracurricular activities, whereas they put less emphasis on the socio-emotional development of their children.

Within the *dimensional approach* researchers have described the intensive parenting phenomenon using various terms, such as intrusive parenting (Taylor et al., 2013[73]), overprotective parenting (Spokas and Heimberg, 2009[74]) and overinvolved parenting (Moberg et al., 2011[75]). The precise meanings of these terms and how they differ from each other often remains unclear. Moreover, helicopter parenting and overparenting are sometimes used interchangeably. Following the suggestion by Garst and Gagnon (2015[35]), this paper uses overparenting as an overarching term:

- **Overparenting** describes a parenting approach that is well-intended but overly effortful and taken to an excessive degree, such as excessive control, support, and problem-solving for the child (Munich and Munich, 2009[76]; Locke, Campbell and Kavanagh, 2012[65]).

Attempts have been made to position the different hyper-parenting styles and overparenting within the classical parenting frameworks (see Box 2.3). The public debates about parenting do not end here. Many more intensive parenting approaches are discussed but, despite other claims, these lack evidence on their developmental impact (Burns and Gottschalk, 2019[4]).

Box 2.3. Positioning intensive parenting approaches within classical parenting frameworks

Attempts have been made to position some of the intensive parenting approaches within the classical parenting frameworks (Maccoby and Martin, 1983[37]; Baumrind, 1971[39]). These approaches may reflect a combination of parenting styles or unique and understudied combinations of parenting dimensions (Garst and Gagnon, 2015[35]).

Tiger parenting

Tiger parenting may be characterised as a combination of authoritativeness and authoritarianism (Zhang et al., 2017[77]; Choi et al., 2013[78]). It is high on both need-supportive and need-thwarting parenting across dimensions (e.g. high on warmth and rejection as well as external and internal pressure) (Xie and Li, 2018[79]; Kim et al., 2013[72]).

Helicopter parenting

Helicopter parents may in many areas simply be assertive and, thus, appear authoritative (LeMoyne and Buchanan, 2011[59]). While authoritative parents are generally assertive and try to shape children's behaviour to a reasonable extent, helicopter parents are intrusive and primarily concerned about children's education and future competitiveness (Garst and Gagnon, 2015[35]). Instead of supporting their children in handling tasks, helicopter parents act on these concerns by ''doing'' it for them, thus impeding their independence and engagement in age-appropriate tasks. Helicopter parenting can be described as: "high on warmth, high on control, and low on granting autonomy" (Padilla-Walker and Nelson, 2012, p. 1178[80]). Unsurprisingly, helicopter parenting has repeatedly been shown to undermine children's and adolescents' need for competence and autonomy (Shaw, 2017[81]; Schiffrin et al., 2014[82]).

Overparenting

Although overparenting shares some elements of the permissive, authoritarian and authoritative parenting styles, it has unique features (Segrin et al., 2012[68]). In contrast

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to "normative parenting", meaning warm parenting that provides structure and autonomy, overparenting involves extreme levels of parental warmth and structure at the expense of autonomy granting (Garst and Gagnon, 2015[35]). Overparenting is additionally characterised by high parental anxiety and expectations paired with excessively protective and controlling behaviour (Garst and Gagnon, 2015[35]; Segrin et al., 2013[83]).

Raising children in digital times

Digital technologies have noticeably altered family life around the world. In digital times, parents need to monitor children's screen time, ensure children' safety and regulate their online behaviour and conduct (Burns and Gottschalk, 2019[4]). The parenting dimensions and styles discussed earlier describe how parents raise and educate children online as much as offline (Valcke et al., 2010[84]; Padilla-Walker et al., 2012[85]). Whether parents show the same parenting approach online as offline may, however, depend on parents' digital knowledge and skills as well as their attitudes towards the use of digital technologies (Álvarez et al., 2013[86]; Brito et al., 2017[87]; Livingstone et al., 2017[88]).

Parents also use technology to assist them in child rearing (so called e-parenting) (Long, 2004[89]). As such technology can reinforce existing parenting tendencies: New surveillance technology facilitates overprotection and control of children and new communication technology allows supportive parents to keep closely connected with children and to display warmth and affection when they are not around (Ghosh et al., 2018[90]; Nakayama, 2011[91]; Bacigalupe and Bräuninger, 2017[92]; Muñoz, Ploderer and Brereton, 2018[93]). At the same time, technology can interfere with parenting tasks (see Box 2.4).

Box 2.4. Digitally emerging parental behaviours

Recently parental behaviours received much attention that emerged with digital technologies and potentially disrupt parenting, such as phubbing and sharenting (Burns and Gottschalk, 2019[4]). More research is needed on influencing factors of such parental behaviours (e.g. socio-economic background and gender) and their developmental impacts.

Parental phubbing

Phubbing relates to the habit of snubbing someone in favour of a mobile phone where individuals are entirely captivated by their digital devices. Parental phubbing is associated with "technoference" where the use of technology of parents, often cell phones or smartphones, disrupts parents' interaction with their children, partner or spouse (McDaniel and Coyne, 2016[94]). This behaviour can have a negative impact on the parent-child relationship as children may feel ignored and frustrated in their psychological need for relatedness.

Sharenting

Sharenting refers to parents oversharing information about their children on social media. Parents increase children's digital representations on social media, including inappropriate photos (naked and semi-naked or showing them in unfavourable situations) as well as sensitive information and content (Hiniker, 2016[95]; Moser, Chen and Schoenebeck, 2017[96]). When parents overshare information about their children, especially without consent, the relationship with their children may deteriorate (Verswijvel et al., 2019[97]). It deprives children from experiencing autonomy over their digital identities (Ouvrein and Verswijvel, 2019[98]).

2.2. Explaining variations in parenting approaches

As outlined in the previous section research has identified important variations in the way parents raise their children, which ultimately leads to the question: What explains these variations? Which role does culture play and what are other sources of variations (social, economic, individual etc.)? Research discussed origins of the different parenting approaches and influencing factors, which should be integrated into a framework to provide a more comprehensive picture of parenting.

2.2.1. The wider context: Cultural, socio-economic and political factors explaining variations

The role of societies' cultural norms of parenting

Generational, social, and media images of parenting and childhood set up a frame of reference (Bornstein, 2012[99]), pointing, for example, to the outcomes that are considered as desirable by societies (Rodrigo, Byrne and Rodríguez, 2014[10]). Parents generally strive to support their children in becoming competent members of their community, and, hence, interpret their child's behaviour in reference to such socio-cultural norms. They also encourage behaviour that seems appropriate and or discourage behaviour that seems detrimental to adequate functioning within the society (Bornstein, 2012[99]). The impact of cultural norms on parenting approaches is documented in an abundance of studies.

For instance, authoritarian parenting seems more widespread in non-Western cultures and among ethnic minorities in Western countries (Smetana, 2017[11]; Bray and Dawes, 2016[55]; Dwairy et al., 2006[100]). For example, the Western view on authoritative parenting as most beneficial is not necessarily shared by collectivist societies, where a stronger emphasis is put on the development of the group and interdependence than personal development and independence (Supple and Small, 2006[101]; Aunola and Nurmi, 2005[102]; Davids, Roman and Leach, 2016[103]). Tiger parenting has also been linked to various aspects of the Asian collectivistic culture, such as interdependence, conformity, emotional self-control, and humility (Supple and Cavanaugh, 2013[70]; Choi et al., 2013[78]; Sovet and Metz, 2014[71]). Family obligation and academic achievement are often promoted as means of bringing honour to the family. Parents with Asian origins have also been described as stricter and more psychologically controlling, but with the aim of protecting not inhibiting children (Doan et al., 2017[104]; Mousavi, Low and Hashim, 2016[105]; Van Campen and Russell, 2010[106]). This, however, is not the case for all Asian ethnic groups (Van Campen and Russell, 2010[106]; Watabe and Hibbard, 2014[107]) and differences also emerge between regions (Lau and Fung, 2013[108]). Moreover, the view that tiger parenting is "Asian parenting" has been contested by research showing that it is not the most frequent parenting style in Asian families (Kim et al., 2013[72]).

Immigration to a country that differs in parenting norms and the subsequent changes in family structures, dynamics and roles present significant challenges for families: For instance, parents may feel that the socio-cultural context prior to and post-migration may conflict and that the legal system undermines family dynamics and values or that the schooling of children alienates them from their children (Daglar, Melhuish and Barnes, 2010[109]; Nauck and Lotter, 2015[110]; Renzaho et al., 2011[111]). Yet, parents may reflect on their parenting and succeed in achieving a balanced endorsement of the different parenting cultures (acculturation of parenting norms (Cheah, Leung and Zhou, 2013[112]; Prevoo and Tamis-LeMonda, 2017[113]; Lau and Fung, 2013[108]).

The socio-economic, political and technological context of parenting

Parenting also changes with technological, socio-economic and political context. Doepke and Zilibotti (2014[114]) assume, for instance, that parents push children harder in societies where education and effort are highly rewarded and opportunities are limited without sufficient education, compared to parents in societies with low returns to education. Findings from the World Value Survey (WVS) show that countries such as Sweden and Norway with low earning inequality, generous redistributive policies, and low stakes in education had a higher share of permissive parents (Doepke and Zilibotti, 2014[54]). In more unequal countries (i.e. low redistribution and high stakes in education), like the United States, parents seem to favour authoritative and (to a lesser extent) authoritarian parenting.

According to Doepke and Zilibotti (2014[114]), rising income inequalities and higher educational returns over the last 30 years also drive the overparenting trend with parents intensifying efforts to ensure their children's success. Factors such as a highly segmented labour market or strict admission criteria to prestigious colleges or universities (e.g. flawless academic records and testing of candidates) (OECD, 2019[115]; Kwon, Yoo and Bingham, 2016[116]). Scholars have even claimed that such economic factors have cultivated an "intensive parenting culture" (see Box 2.5), now being endorsed by parents from different socio-economic and ethnic backgrounds (Ishizuka, 2019[61]; Parker, 2015[117]).

Box 2.5. The evolvement of an "intensive parenting culture"?

**Intensive parenting as an attempt to manage the perceived increase in risk, uncertainty and responsibility**

Scholars have suggested that modernisation has cultivated a culture that prompts parents to adopt forms of intensive parenting (Pimentel, 2016[19]). To begin with, the uncertainty associated with modern life has contributed to the development of a risk society, where parents have become risk averse (Tremblay et al., 2015[27]). Though safer than ever before, today's children are seen as more 'vulnerable' to physical and socio-emotional risks (Scott, Jackson and Backett-Milburn, 1998[118]; Faircloth, 2014[12]). Media sensationalisation (e.g. of stranger abduction cases) has sharpened parents' eyes towards potential dangers and nurtured their need to constantly assess and manage risks in all areas of children's life (Garst and Gagnon, 2015[35]).

Faircloth claims that the social importance of the parent role has inflated, which for many has evolved to an 'identity-work' akin to a vocation (Faircloth, 2013[119]). Consequently, the feeling of fulfilment and achievement depends for many parents on their children. Scholars also point to stronger individualisation of parental responsibility (Rutherford, 2011[120]), resulting from the social disconnect from communities and the extended family. At the same time, parents perceive a reduction of control with less room to influence their children than in the past, leading to widespread concerns among parents about their ability to ensure children's well-being and success in the future.

Legislations also influence children's upbringing. From 1979 on the number of countries with equivalent legislation has steadily risen to 54 in 2018 (see Figure 2.2), which may have contributed to the general decrease of parents' use of physical discipline and authoritarian parenting discussed earlier (OECD, 2019[121]). Studies also show that digital technologies impact parent-child interactions around the globe, though consequences may slightly differ between countries (Brosch, 2016[122]; Marasli et al., 2016[123]; Sivak and Smirnov, 2019[124]; Angeluci and Huang, 2015[125]; Silva, Freire and Jimenez, 2017[126]).

Figure 2.2. Legislation against corporal punishment

Cumulative number of states prohibiting all corporal punishment of children by law, 1978-2018
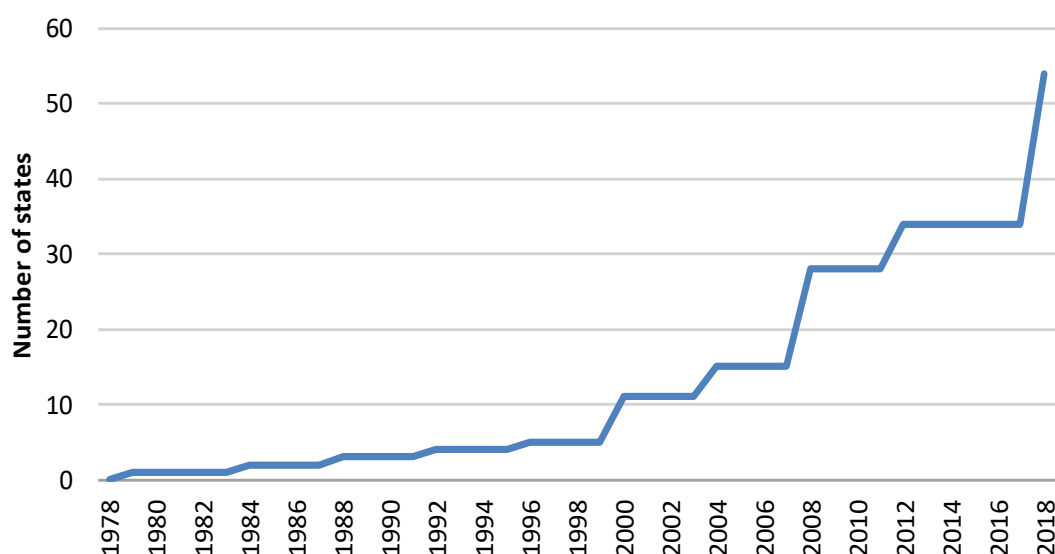
Note: Countries included have made corporal punishment unlawful in all settings, including the home.
Source: "Spare the child: Cumulative number of states prohibiting all corporal punishment of children by law, 1978-2018", in *Trends Shaping Education 2019* (OECD, 2019[121])

2.2.2. The family and community context: Family life and resources linked to variations

Parenting changes with family structure (e.g. number of children and age span between them) but also with family living arrangements and the quality of family relationships (Bradley-Geist and Olson-Buchanan, 2014[69]; Smetana, 2017[11]). A positive relationship between parents seems to build a cornerstone for warm, supportive parenting, because family and marital stress can disrupt parenting (Vafaeenejad et al., 2019[127]; Krishnakumar and Buehler, 2000[128]). Single and divorced parents may differ from (re-)married parents in warmth, control and parenting style (Bronte-Tinkew, Scott and Lilja, 2010[129]; Belsky et al., 2007[130]; Fox, Platz and Bentley, 1995[131]). Moreover, the custodial arrangement seems to play a role (Bastaits and Mortelmans, 2017[132]; Finzi-Dottan and Cohen, 2016[133]). It is unfortunate that there is little solid knowledge about same-sex parenting and adoption despite its growing importance (Schumm, 2016[134]; Allen, 2015[135]).

The functioning of a family also depends on its socio-economic and social resources. Cohesive and well-resourced environments support families in their functioning. A large support network (e.g. friends, relatives, teachers, neighbours) is important for responsiveness and nurturing at home, especially for economically disadvantaged parents (Bray and Dawes, 2016[55]; Barber et al., 2005[136]; Power et al., 2013[31]). Members of the network may also be more directly involved in the child-raising task. For instance, grandparents' role may range from distant, brief contacts with grandchildren to that of an (informal or formal) primary caretaker of grandchildren, especially in Hispanic and Asian families (Winefield and Air, 2010[137]; Neugarten and Weinstein, 1964[138]).

Moreover, the economic situation of the family is important for its functioning: Parents overwhelmed by economic pressures such as the job instability and the inability to pay monthly bills, may feel depressed and demoralised; a breeding ground for marital conflict and disruptions in parenting (Whitbeck et al., 1997[139]; Neppl et al., 2015[140]; Parke et al.,

2004[141]; Kwon and Wickrama, 2014[142]; Gutman and Eccles, 1999[143]). Lower socio-economic status, lower income and education are associated with authoritarian parenting as well as colder and more controlling mother-child-interactions (Smetana, 2017[11]; Azad, Blacher and Marcoulides, 2014[144]; Hill and Tyson, 2009[145]).

As digital parenting behaviours appear grounded in the parenting approach offline, socio-economic differences affect both in related ways (Livingstone et al., 2015[146]; Valcke et al., 2010[84]). Parents with a low socio-economic background tend to lack sufficient digital skills to extent their parenting efforts successfully into the digital world (OECD, 2019[147]). They are also less confident about managing digital risks, and tend to try to minimise them through restrictions or direct control (Hollingworth et al., 2011[148]; Paus-Hasebrink et al., 2013[149]; Konok, Bunford and Miklósi, 2020[150]). In contrast, socioeconomically advantaged parents tend to approve 'technologies of connection' that allow warm support and control at a distance (e.g. mobile phones), but disapprove of 'constraining technologies' (e.g. parental controls and filters) (Nelson, 2010[151]). This research area will continue to grow and evolve along with technology and parental reactions to that technology.

2.2.3. The individual level: Parent-child reciprocity in parenting

Personal attributes and motivations of parents

Parents approach to parenting is routed in their individual value and belief system (Darling, Steinberg and Steinberg, 1993[152]; Bornstein, 2012[99]). Parents, for example, orient their efforts towards important developmental goals they have for their children, which are routed in socio-cultural norms but are also personally motivated: Independent of culture, parents who aim for obedience, interdependence and school achievement as primary goals in child-rearing tend to be more authoritarian and controlling, whereas parents who strive for promoting independence and social competence in their children are less controlling and more authoritative (Schwarz, Schäfermeier and Trommsdorff, 2005[153]; Meng, 2012[154]; Rao, McHale and Pearson, 2003[155]).

Furthermore, beliefs about the nature of child learning (i.e. epistemic beliefs) play a role for the parenting style adopted: Constructivist beliefs (i.e. seeing learning as effortful and under the learner's control and knowledge as actively constructed) were associated with an authoritative parenting style. By contrast, a view of learning as quick, relatively automatic, passive and based on innate and relatively fixed abilities was associated with an authoritarian or permissive style (Ricco and Rodriguez, 2006[156]). Equally important, the attribution style of authoritarian and authoritative parents seems to differ (Coplan et al., 2002[157]): Former attribute child aggression and misbehaviour more internally and react with greater anger and embarrassment.

In spite of a significant shift in gender roles and parental roles over time (see Box 2.6), mothering is still different from fathering (McKinney and Renk, 2008[158]; Endendijk et al., 2016[159]). While studies often found that mothers were described as more psychologically controlling, overinvolved, authoritative and permissive, fathers seem to be often perceived as more authoritarian (McKinney and Renk, 2008[158]; Bendikas, 2010[160]; Uji et al., 2014[161]; Rousseau and Scharf, 2015[162]).

The parenting approach may also be an expression of other personal attributes apart from gender: More extraverted, agreeable parents tend to be warmer, whereas neurotic, perfectionist parents exert more pressure on their children (Huver et al., 2010[163]; Vafaeenejad et al., 2019[127]). Furthermore, overparenting was shown to relate to parental anxiety, narcissism and feelings of entitlement (Garst and Gagnon, 2015[35]; Segrin et al.,

2013[83]). Mental illness (e.g. depression, anxiety, schizophrenia) seems to impede warm-supportive parenting (Vafaeenejad et al., 2019[127]).

The parenting approach may also reflect parents' own needs and childhood experiences, rather than being directed to the child (Kershaw et al., 2014[164]; Vafaeenejad et al., 2019[127]). Controlling behaviour, for instance, can be a sign of parents' own separation anxiety (Garst and Gagnon, 2015[35]; Padilla-Walker and Nelson, 2012[80]).

Box 2.6. The parenting roles of 21st century fathers

For generations, men have been socialised as providers and disciplinarians, and women according to the maternal role as that of a caregiver (Rodrigo, Byrne and Rodríguez, 2014[10]; McKinney and Renk, 2008[158]). In more recent decades, roles have slowly shifted as a result of economic, demographic, and political changes, such as women's' increased economic role, declining fertility rates and implementation of paternity leave legislations in many countries (see section 1). For a long time research has solely focused on mothers. This has changed and fathers' role for child development and well-being has increasingly be acknowledged in research.

The modern day father comes in various forms (e.g. single or married; externally employed or stay-at home; gay or straight; an adoptive or step-parent). Furthermore, a father's childcare time has increased substantially in many Western countries (Dotti Sani and Treas, 2016[62]; Doepke and Zilibotti, 2014[54]) and fathers take a more active role in caregiving (e.g. physical care, play) (Craig, Powell and Smyth, 2014[63]; Hofferth and Lee, 2015[165]; Sayer, Bianchi and Robinson, 2004[166]). A Swedish study also observed a shift towards more egalitarian decision making in the family as well as towards an equal respect of and support from mothers and fathers since the 80s (Trifan, Stattin and Tilton-Weaver, 2014[56]). Paternal engagement in family matters depends, however, on various factors such as educational background, employment status and working hours of both, mothers and fathers, quality of couple relationship, child gender and individual psychological characteristics (Dotti Sani and Treas, 2016[62]; Doepke and Zilibotti, 2014[54]).

Children's influence on parenting

Caregiving is a two-way street. Children are not simply passive recipients of parenting, they also influence their parents at the same time that parents influence their children (Bornstein, 2019[1]; Rodrigo, Byrne and Rodríguez, 2014[10]). This is why children's characters form an important part of the parenting equation: Authoritative parenting and bonding is easier with more social children (Vafaeenejad et al., 2019[127]). A child that is positive and less active, is less straining for mothers, and, thus, psychological control is reduced (Laukkanen et al., 2014[167]). In contrast, caring with love, affection and confidence for a child with a difficult temperament (e.g. negative emotions, maladjustment, and anger) may be difficult (Vafaeenejad et al., 2019[127]). Similarly, illnesses, disorders and disabilities of children (e.g. anxiety disorder, Down's syndrome, non-organic failure to thrive) can be distressing, potentially affecting parents' ability to respond appropriately; even to siblings (Vafaeenejad et al., 2019[127]; Black et al., 1994[168]; Pinquart, 2013[169]).

Parenting is also gendered and changes with children's age and developmental status: Parents were more authoritarian and slightly more pressuring with boys and more authoritative with girls (Russell et al., 1998[170]; Endendijk et al., 2016[159]). Even though parenting styles are generally stable over time (Zhang et al., 2017[77]) and individuals

remain more or less responsive, autonomy supportive, or controlling compared to other parents, they slightly adapt their parenting approach as children mature (i.e. higher *relative* than *absolute stability* in parenting approaches) (Forehand and Jones, 2002[171]; Matte-Gagné, Bernier and Gagné, 2013[172]; Bornstein et al., 2010[173]; Dallaire and Weinraub, 2005[174]; Rimehaug, Wallander and Berg-Nielsen, 2011[175]).

3. Developmental impact of parenting approaches

By now, a number of studies has explored the influence of parents and primary caregivers on children's development (Bornstein, 2019[1]; Skinner, Johnson and Snyder, 2005[2]; Smetana, 2017[11]). Research has often focused on parenting styles and dimensions, as they are thought to explain parenting behaviours across various domains, and, thus a wide range of child outcomes. Several reviews have summarised the evidence pointing to the developmental advantage of certain approaches (Becoña et al., 2012[176]; Claudio, 2016[177]; Collins, Duncanson and Burrows, 2014[178]; Davids and Roman, 2014[179]; Davids, Roman and Leach, 2016[103]). Yet, reviews usually focus on a specific outcome without covering potential effects for other outcomes and domains.

It can, thus, be difficult for stakeholders to get a clear overall impression on the relative benefits and harms of different approaches: How beneficial are the different approaches for fostering outcomes in a specific domain of interest and are there (harmful) side-effects in other domains? Which approach promises overall the best results? This section, therefore, provides an overall picture of the benefits and harms of the different parenting approaches in four important developmental domain:

1. cognitive-academic development and job success (e.g. academic achievement, self-regulation skills, career decision-making difficulties),

2. emotional development and well-being (e.g. self-esteem, internalising problems),

3. social development and relationships (e.g. peer acceptance, externalising behaviour),

4. physical development and health (e.g. moderate-to-vigorous physical activity, obesity).

To provide further evidence for the development of a parenting framework, this section also points to potential factors that could explain variations in results, i.e. why children are not equally impacted by parenting approaches, such as contextual and individuals factors

3.1. Comparing the developmental benefits and harms of parenting approaches

Table 3.1 to Table 3.3 provide overall pictures of the evidence identified through the scoping review[1] (Arksey and O'Malley, 2005[180]; Schmucker et al., 2013[181]; Snilstveit et al., 2016[182]). They separately map the evidence from 81 primary quantitative studies

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[1] A comprehensive and systematic search and summary of evidence for all approaches and outcomes was beyond the scope of this paper. Instead, the summary is based on a scoping of the existing literature starting with relevant systematic reviews and meta-analyses, complemented with primary quantitative studies to close gaps in the review literature (e.g. for modern parenting styles and dimensions or developmental outcomes and domains not considered in reviews). This scoping review is not a comprehensive systematic review. Even though aimed at identifying the most relevant research, the search did not follow any specific protocol and was not documented and the quality of studies not systematically assessed.

and 29 meta-studies (i.e. reviews and meta-analyses) for each parenting style and dimension (rows) and each of the four outcome domains (columns). Table A A.1 in the Annex provides an overview of the studies included in the scoping review.

Each (meta-)study is represented by a circle, colour coded green, red and yellow corresponding to overall positive, negative or mixed results (i.e. positive and negative results without clear indications). Grey signals overall non-significant findings, whereas light red and green point to mostly positive or negative impact with some variations. The size of each circle represents the number of (meta-) studies. Gaps in the tables highlight evidence gaps.

3.1.1. Associations with classical parenting styles

As discussed in section 2 parenting styles describes the parenting approach along different dimensions and, thus, their combined effect on child development. The scoped evidence indicates:

- *Authoritative parenting* is the most beneficial style (see Table 3.1). Research associates this style of parentings with a number of positive outcomes along all four developmental domains such as better academic achievement, a higher self-esteem, less bullying (as predator or victim) and a lower substance use (i.e. tobacco, alcohol, drugs).

- *Authoritarian parenting*, in contrast, is mostly associated with negative results for children's and adolescents' academic, social and emotional development and has been related to various negative outcomes such as internalising and externalising behaviours. The scoping exercise did, however, reveal some mixed findings and potential positive effects for the physical development of children (e.g. lower risk for obesity).

- Though less beneficial than authoritative parenting, the overall picture for *permissive parenting* is less clear. Across all dimensions, findings vary: Permissive parenting is, for instance, associated with lower academic achievements but a higher academic self-esteem, less suicidal thoughts but more depressive symptoms. Meta-studies even produce conflicting results with one pointing to less delinquent behaviours and school misconduct, whereas another found more delinquent behaviours of permissively raised children. Equal inconsistency exist for the physical domain: Permissive parenting is partly related to a higher weight but at the same time to healthier lifestyle behaviours (nutrition, sleep duration and quality etc.).

- Without doubt, *neglectful parenting* is harmful. This type of parenting is associated with negative outcomes across all domains such as lower academic achievements, higher internalising and externalising behaviours (also online) as well as substance abuse and a higher weight.

3.1.2. Associations with key parenting dimensions

As outlined in section 2, the dimensional approach helps identify the specific contribution of individual parenting dimensions to the parental impact on child development. Evidently, children grow into (especially socio-emotional) competent and healthy adults if their need for relatedness is nurtured, whereas thwarting it has negative consequences (see Table 3.2). Pressuring children and adolescents seems to impede their developments particularly. The evidence also suggests that parents need to grant children and adolescents autonomy and at the same time provide to a certain extent structure to thrive and fulfil their potential. All in

all, the overall results for specific dimensions suggest that nurturing on a single dimensions is not sufficient as a healthy and prosperous development requires nurturing of all needs.

3.1.3. Associations with intensive parenting

Though receiving increasing attention (especially helicopter parenting), research on intensive parenting is still sparse and the scoping results are almost exclusively based on single studies (see Table 3.3). By interfering in their lives and solving problems for them, helicopter parents and overinvolved parents thwart children's and adolescents' need for competence and autonomy (as discussed in section 2). Accordingly, research evidence overall negative consequences for helicopter parenting (e.g. social anxiety, lower school engagement as well emotional and physical well-being) and overparenting, (e.g. academic procrastination, anxiety, externalising behaviours and overweight) with latter potentially yielding some positive outcomes (e.g. clarity of life goals, life satisfaction).

Due to the limited number of studies, the results for tiger parenting need to be interpreted with caution. Tiger parenting (exclusively researched in Asian families) seems to provoke academic pressure and depression in children and adolescents, though findings are less clear with regard to their academic performance. The limited evidence for concerted cultivation does not allow for a judgment about its developmental impact.

Table 3.1. Associations between classical parenting styles and child outcomes

Note: Size of bubbles represents sample size for primary studies/meta-studies as follows: ● < 322 participants / studies ● < 769 participants / 44 studies ● < 37,577 participants / 308 studies.

Outcomes are colour coded as follows: ● = non-significant, ● = inconclusive, ● = negative, ● = mostly negative, ● = mostly positive, ● = positive.

Source: Table A A.2.

Table 3.2. Associations of classical parenting dimensions with child outcomes
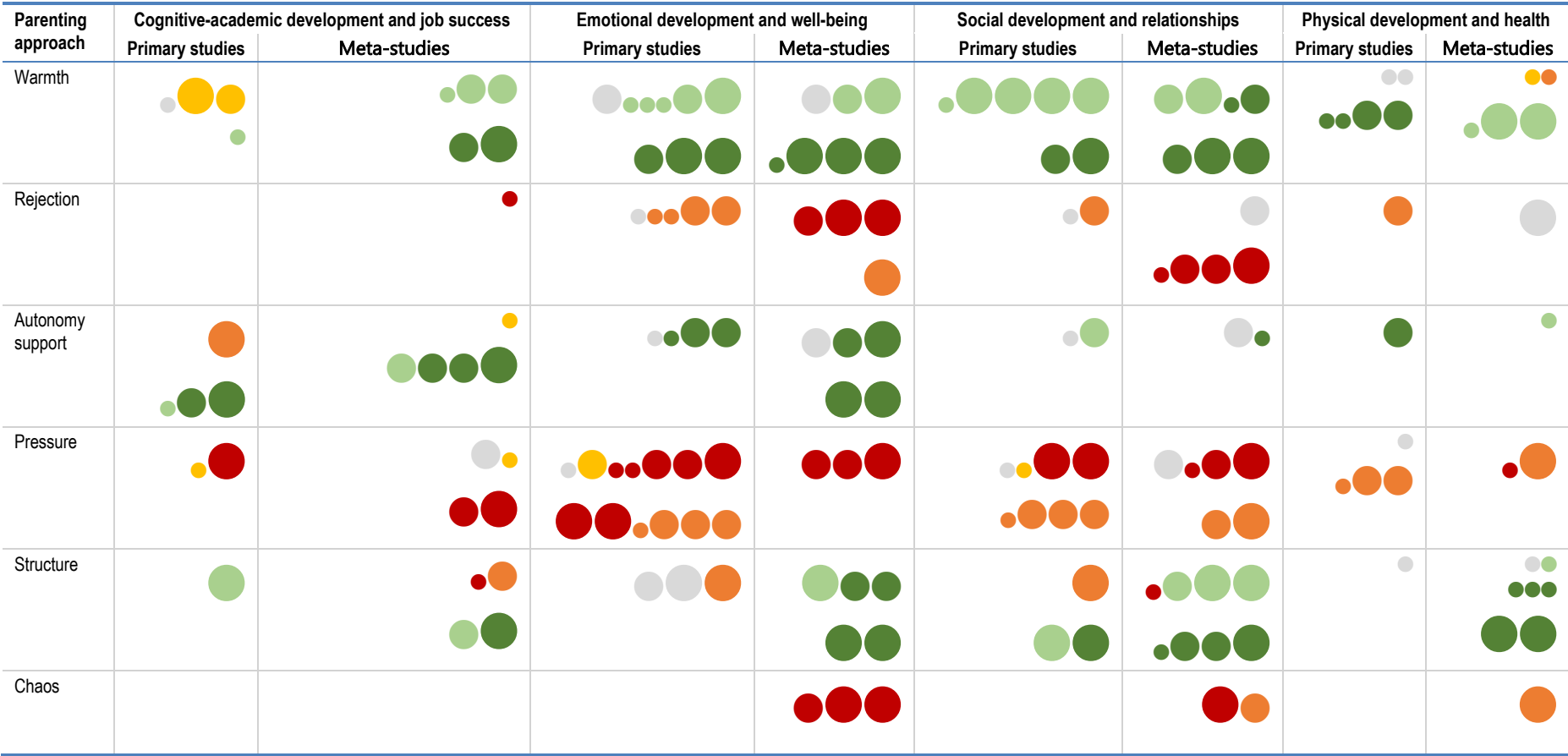
Note: Size of bubbles represents sample size for primary studies/meta-studies as follows: ● < 322 participants / studies ⬤ < 769 participants / 44 studies ⬤ < 37,577 participants / 308 studies.

Outcomes are colour coded as follows: ● = non-significant, ● = inconclusive, ● = negative, ● = mostly negative, ● = mostly positive, ● = positive.

Source: Table A A.2.

Table 3.3. Associations of intensive parenting styles and dimensions with child outcomes

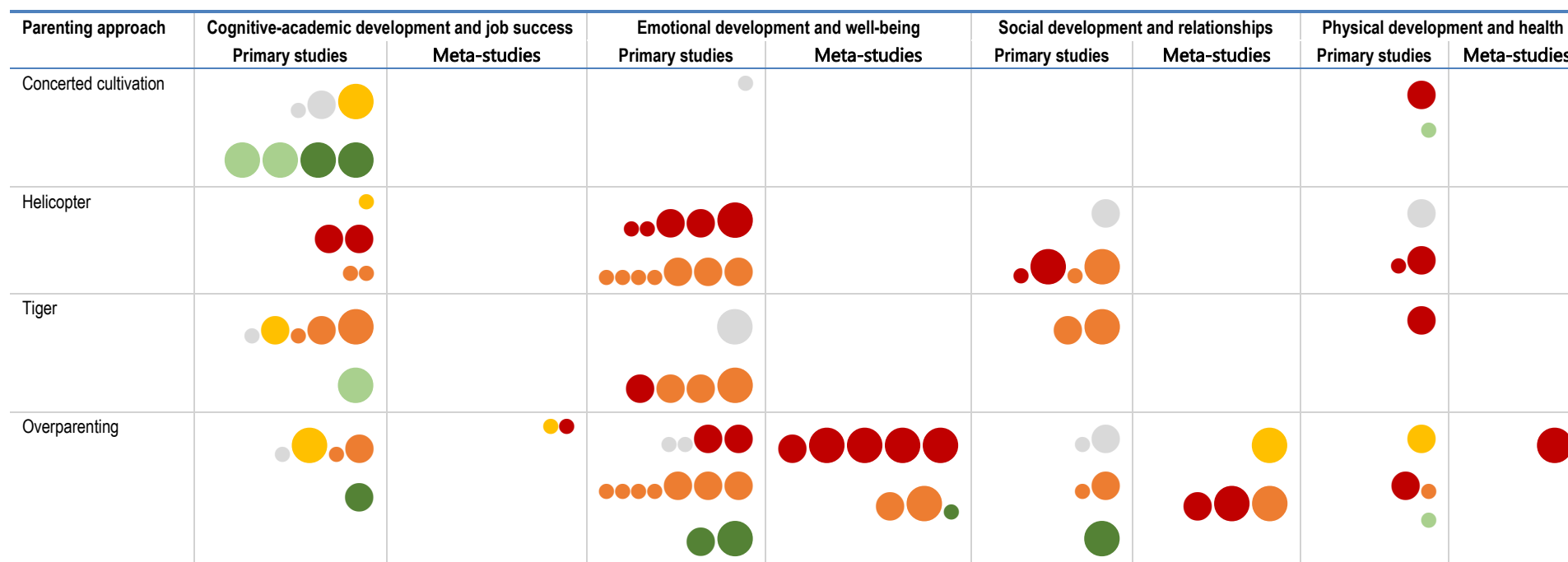| Parenting approach	Cognitive-academic development and job success		Emotional development and well-being		Social development and relationships		Physical development and health	
	Primary studies	Meta-studies	Primary studies	Meta-studies	Primary studies	Meta-studies	Primary studies	Meta-studies
Concerted cultivation								
Helicopter								
Tiger								
Overparenting								

Note: Size of bubbles represents sample size for primary studies/meta-studies as follows: ● < 322 participants / studies ⬤ < 769 participants / 44 studies ⬤ < 37,577 participants / 308 studies.

Outcomes are colour coded as follows: ● = non-significant, ● = inconclusive, ● = negative, ● = mostly negative, ● = mostly positive, ● = positive.
Source: Table A A.2.

3.1. Explaining the differential impact of parenting approaches

A parenting framework needs to take account of the inconsistent findings regarding the developmental impact of parenting approaches revealed through the scoping exercise. Apart from methodological reasons, various moderating and mediating factors (such as culture or divergent parenting approaches in the household) may explain why children are not equally impacted by parenting approaches.

3.1.1. The wider context: Changing cultural meaning and impact of parenting

Some researchers question universal assertions of "effective parenting styles", because their impact partially depends on the meaning that societies give to the parenting task (Rodrigo, Byrne and Rodríguez, 2014[10]). While parental effects are generally consistent across countries and ethnic groups especially for those that have rather similar parenting norms (Barber et al., 2005[136]; Garcia et al., 2019[52]; Calafat et al., 2014[53]), some studies point to the cultural specificities of effects. For instance, authoritative parenting may not necessarily be academically more beneficial than authoritarian parenting for African-Americans and certain Asian (immigrant) groups (Van Campen and Russell, 2010[106]; Rodrigo, Byrne and Rodríguez, 2014[10]; Power et al., 2013[31]). In addition, a stricter control by parents may be perceived as more appropriate, explaining its differential effectiveness for shaping the online behaviour and decision making of Asian and African-American youth compared to Caucasian youth (Davids, Roman and Leach, 2016[103]; Elsaesser et al., 2017[43]).

3.1.2. The family and community context: The combined impact of caretaking in the community

It takes a village to raise a child

The impact of parenting may also differ on a regional level (Lei et al., 2018[183]) and the communities and neighbourhoods families live in. Smetana even hypothesises that the reason why authoritarian, strict parenting sometimes shows positive results for ethnic minorities in the United States is the fact that they often live in poor communities and dangerous neighbourhoods. In these cases, such a type of parenting may have a protective effect (Smetana, 2017[11]). In contrast to this hypothesis are observations of Goldner and colleagues (Goldner et al., 2016[184]) and Lima and colleagues (Lima et al., 2010[185]) that adverse, dangerous neighbourhood exacerbate the negative effect of harsh discipline and a cold, rejecting parenting. A resourceful, cohesive neighbourhood, on the other hand, can increase parenting efforts and enhance its effect: Not only was parental monitoring higher for parents living in such neighbourhoods but its effect on prosocial competency and problem behaviour was also enhanced (Rankin and Quane, 2002[186]).

It takes two to tango

In most cases, children have more than one caregiver, traditionally mother and father, and the parenting task is a shared responsibility. Even though most studies confirm that the combined parenting approach of the household explains children's developmental trajectories (Uji et al., 2014[161]; Ruiz-Hernándeza et al., 2019[187]; Sangawi, Adams and Reissland, 2015[188]), research also pointed to differences regarding the influence of mothers' versus fathers' parenting, which sometimes also differed for boys versus girls (Woo and Yeo, 2019[189]; Bendikas, 2010[160]). Only few studies explored how different combinations of parenting in the household play out for children's development: The

co-occurrence of an authoritarian mother and permissive or neglectful father differed from that of two authoritarian parents (Braza et al., 2015[190]; Power et al., 2013[31]).

The combined parenting approach of parents also matters for children of divorced parents: Authoritative and warm parenting of (step-)parents or the divorced parents has positive implications for child development (even if the child is raised in a different household), whereas a neglectful style is harmful for children (Nicholson et al., 2008[191]; Campana et al., 2008[192]; Nielsen, 2011[193]; Bastaits and Mortelmans, 2016[194]). Additional studies showed that a warm, responsive parenting is important for adopted children's adjustment, especially after adverse experience prior to adoption (Paine et al., 2020[195]; Simmel, 2007[196]; Stams, Juffer and van IJzendoorn, 2002[197]).

In many families, caregivers other than parents take over substantial share of the parenting task (e.g. grandparents or other relatives, neighbours or teachers). This is still insufficiently captured in parenting research but research on this topic is evolving. The effect of grandparenting, for example, seems to depend on the caregiving roles, residence and personal attributes of grandparents (such as age, health and personality) as well as their relationships to their grandchildren and the parents (Duflos, Giraudeau and Ferrand, 2020[198]; Neugarten and Weinstein, 1964[138]; Sadruddin et al., 2019[199]) .

3.1.3. The individual level: Children in the driver's seat

Every child is different

Children's gender and personal attributes not only elicit different parenting behaviours (see section 2) but also change their impact. Certain parenting effects seem to be gendered (Braza et al., 2015[190]; Elsaesser et al., 2017[43]; Ruiz-Hernándeza et al., 2019[187]). For example, authoritarian parenting was a particular risk factor of cyberbullying victimisation for girls (Moreno–Ruiz, Martínez–Ferrer and García–Bacete, 2019[200]). Parental effects also seem to depend on children's temperament and mental health conditions: Parental control and warmth were more important for the social development of adolescents with lower affect and behaviour regulation (Stice and Gonzales, 1998[201]). College students with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder showed lower performance regardless of parenting style, though parenting style mattered for the academic achievement of their peers (Jones, Rabinovitch and Hubbard, 2015[202]).

Children as interpreters of parenting

Children interpret and, thus, react differently to parenting efforts (Rodrigo, Byrne and Rodríguez, 2014[10]; Grusec and Goodnow, 1994[203]). That is why, children's interpretation of parents' action is a key piece of the puzzle on differential impact of parenting (e.g. children's beliefs about what is legitimate and normative in parenting) (Smetana, 2017[11]). Controlling and demanding behaviours of mothers had more positive implications for children's self-regulatory development if the child assumed positive intentions (e.g. "my mother means well") (Rodrigo, Byrne and Rodríguez, 2014[10]).

Interpretations change with age and cultural background of children. For instance, children's acceptance of physical punishment or shaming decreased with age (Rodrigo, Byrne and Rodríguez, 2014[10]; Smetana, 2017[11]). Chinese youth, similar to Black youth, interpreted parental control as an expression of parents' concern and caring (Rodrigo, Byrne and Rodríguez, 2014[10]; Van Campen and Russell, 2010[106]). They also saw shaming as more normative and less psychologically harmful (Smetana, 2017[11]). Forms of overinvolvement such as help with academic issues (e.g. help them with their essays and projects) and social aspects (e.g. friendship advice), normally regarded as intrusive and

inappropriate, were encouraged by Cyprus undergraduate students (Lamprianou, Symeou and Theodorou, 2019[204]).

Naturally, the perception of children and parents on parenting can differ: Yeung and colleagues found divergent views on the extent of authoritative parenting with negative implications for child's perspective taking and self-esteem (Yeung et al., 2016[205]). Divergent views may pose particular challenges in immigrant families: Different rates and styles of acculturation to the new societies (e.g. children acculturating faster than their parents), may distance immigrant children from their parents, evoke resistances to parental interventions and consequently impoverish the communication and relationship between parents and children (Renzaho and Mellor, 2010[206]; Renzaho et al., 2011[111]). Parent-child acculturation gaps and subsequent intergenerational conflicts are risk factors to immigrant children's and adolescents' adjustments (Daglar, Melhuish and Barnes, 2010[109]; Leung, Lau and Lam, 1998[207]).

Children as active agents of parenting

Children are also not passive respondents to parenting. As already discussed, children influence their parents at the same time as parents influence their children. The 'monitoring debate' illustrates this well and shows that children's own action have developmental implications: Monitoring is frequently understood in a way that parents obtain knowledge of adolescents' activities and friendships by being attentive and tracking children's life, when actually, they often acquire most of it through their children (Rodrigo, Byrne and Rodríguez, 2014[10]; Stattin and Kerr, 2000[208]). Thus, adolescents' disclosure of information, rather than parental monitoring, may influence parents' knowledge about their whereabouts, which was found to reduce problem behaviour over time (Willoughby and Hamza, 2011[209]). A trusting relationship is key for adolescents' willingness to disclose, which grows whenever disclosures are followed by a positive, supportive reaction from parents (Smetana, 2017[11]; Rodrigo, Byrne and Rodríguez, 2014[10]; Kobak et al., 2017[210]).

4. Synthesis and conclusion

This section proposes a parenting framework that synthesises the reviewed parenting literature and integrates the factors explaining variations and differential impacts of parenting approaches. Then, drawing on framework and literature review, implications for family policies and support, as well as research implications are discussed.

4.1. An evidence-based and culturally-sensitive framework of parenting

In the 21st century, as in the past, parents differ in how they raise their children. Such differences can be described with dimensions or styles, which have been shown to affect children's and adolescents' development across a wide range of outcomes. Overall, an authoritative approach that is warm and provides structure and autonomy seems to foster a prosperous and healthy development, while neglecting children and adolescents and thwarting their needs for relatedness, competence and autonomy seems particularly harmful.

Notwithstanding, neither parenting nor child development occur in a vacuum: Both emerge in a national, regional and family context (Bornstein, 2012[99]; Hill et al., 2007[211]; Prevoo and Tamis-LeMonda, 2017[113]). Figure 4.1 provides a graphical display of a framework that highlights the contextual embeddedness of parenting and child development. The framework points to the main factors explaining variations in parenting and its impact on

different levels: individual; family, neighbourhoods and community; and the wider context. More specifically, the reviewed literature suggests that parenting approaches and their impact vary because:

- **A family's past and present cannot be understood in isolation from history, modernisation and the wider context of parenting:** Parenting and child development are both directly and indirectly influenced by the wider socio-cultural, demographic, physical, technological, economic and political forces that change over time (Bray and Dawes, 2016[55]).

- **''It takes a village to raise a child''** (Power, 2013, p. 90[42]): Families depend on socio-economic and social resources (i.e. supportive neighbourhoods as well as cohesive and well-resourced communities) in their functioning (Rodrigo, Byrne and Rodríguez, 2014[10]). The wider context affects family life through its influence on the resources of families and the communities that families live in (Bray and Dawes, 2016[55]).

- **Parenting is a "family-centred process", instead of primarily parent- or child-driven:** Parenting consists in a process of mutual adaptation, accommodation, and negotiation between parents and children (Rodrigo, Byrne and Rodríguez, 2014[10]). These negotiations and interactions are embedded in a history of family relationships (e.g. parent-child trust or mistrust, quality of co-parenting), which constrains the interpretation of parents and children of the other's behaviour.

- **Parenting is an expression of parents' individuality**: Rather than exclusively directed to the child, parenting is also an expression of gender roles as well as of personal experiences and attributes of parents (Kershaw et al., 2014[164]; Vafaeenejad et al., 2019[127]).

- **Parenting is a two-way street and children are also in the driver's seat:** Children and adolescents are not passive recipients of parenting but influence their parents at the same time that parents influence their children. Children evoke, interpret and react to parenting, and, thus, actively shape it and its developmental impact (Smetana, 2017[11]).

As illustrated in the review (see sections 2 and 3), the systematic consideration of such contextual and individual factors improves the precision of understanding both parenting and its effects on children's and adolescents' development.

Figure 4.1. A framework for understanding parenting and its impact on child development and well-being

An ecological model that situates parenting and child development into the context of family life.
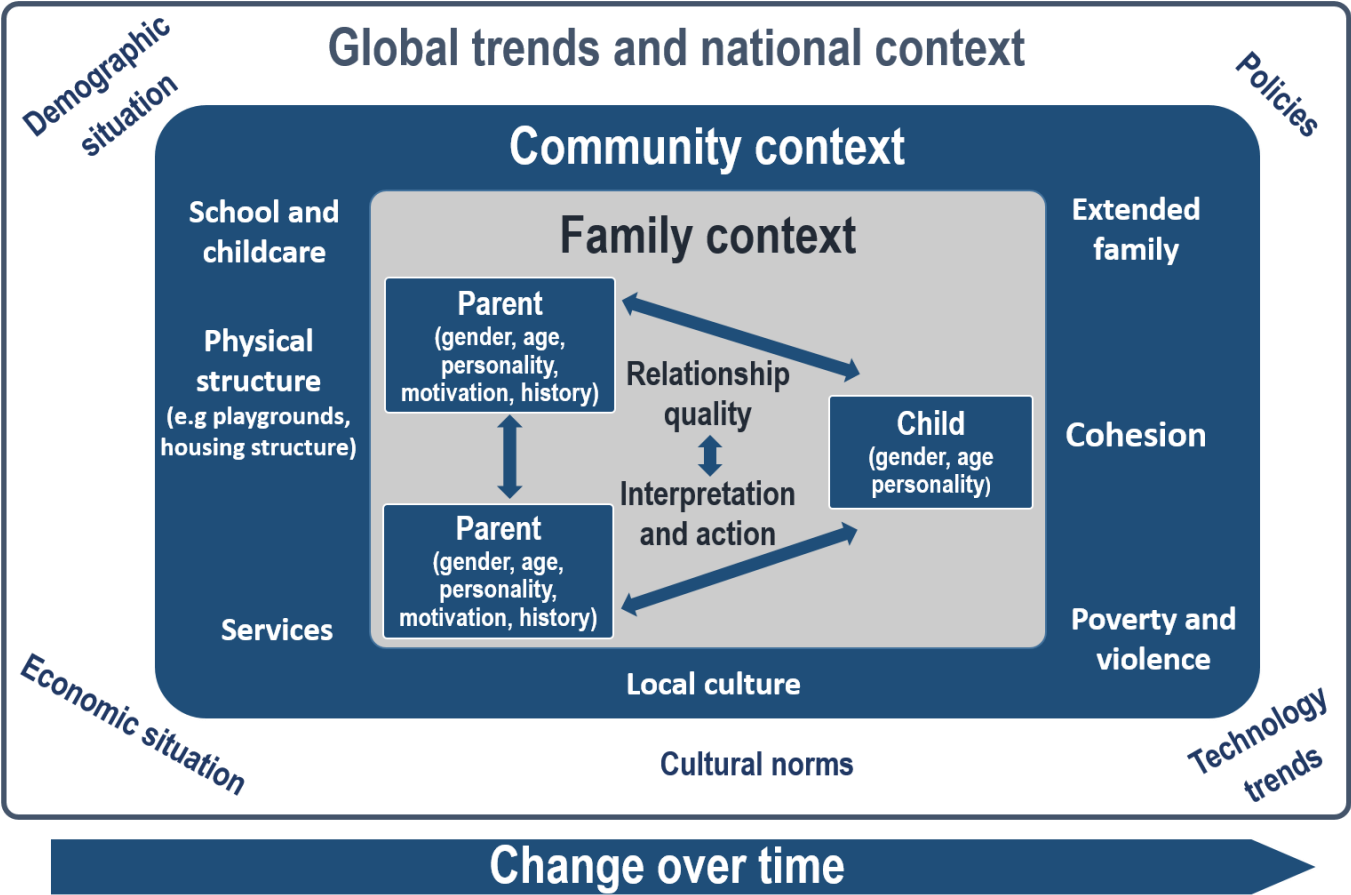
Source: Adapted from Bray and Dawes (2016[55]).

4.2. Implications for policy and practice

The review of the parenting literature highlighted the role of parenting for a healthy and prosperous development of children and adolescents. Without a doubt, parenting is challenging and requires support. While parenting is in many respects a private matter, public policies can create structures and services that enable parents to acquire and practice parenting skills beneficial for a prosperous and healthy development of children. There are various options for policy and practice to support families – some of which will be discussed here. As illustrated in the review and framework, focusing exclusively on the parents seems short-sighted; an effective parenting strategy is multi-layered and includes, inter alia, the following:

1.   **Increasing the economic support to families:** Several studies related economic hardship to disrupted family functioning and parenting as well as negative child outcomes (Whitbeck et al., 1997[139]; Parke et al., 2004[141]; Kwon and Wickrama, 2014[142]). Moreover, studies from different countries showed that a higher living standard relates to authoritative parenting (Zhang and Ikeda, 2018[212]) and that cash transfers for families can improve parenting behaviours and child outcomes, for example conditional cash transfers to low-income families (i.e. the financial assistance with prescriptions around service use by receiving families such as attendance at school or a parenting programme) (Macours, Schady and Vakis, 2017[213]; Cooper and Stewart, 2017[214]; Wolf et al., 2017[215]; Daly et al., 2015[20]). Thus, a system of taxes and social benefits that provides an adequate income for families, including single parents, could help mitigate family stress and improve family functioning (OECD, 2020[216]; UNICEF, 2019[217]; Shulruf, O'Loughlin and Tolley, 2009[218]).

2.   **Mitigating family stress and enhancing family bonding through labour market and welfare policies:** Labour market and welfare policies can also help parents in their functioning, for example by reducing precarious working conditions (parents juggling multiple jobs), ensuring stabile, well-paid jobs and allowing flexibility in work models without repercussions (e.g. part-time work with secured pensions) (UNICEF, 2019[219]; OECD, 2007[220]; Daly et al., 2015[20]). Time to care for children that is compensated for by paid leave allows for quality time and bonding, especially in the early years. This is crucial for establishing trusting relationships and warm and supportive parenting and paid parental leave has shown to relate to parental well-being and maternal employment rate after the leave period (Myrskylä and Margolis, 2013[221]; Kluve and Tamm, 2013[222]; Hewitt, Strazdins and Martin, 2017[223]). Though the effect of different parental leave systems may vary (Joseph et al., 2013[224]). Family stress can be further minimised through the availability and affordability of housing and family services (e.g. childcare subsidies, especially for disadvantaged families, longer hours of care and after-school provision for working parents).

3.   **Empowering communities and strengthening the local support network for families:** Family functioning depends on the quality of neighbourhoods and cohesive, well-resourced communities (Rodrigo et al., 2014). Supportive communities provide high-quality family services (e.g. childcare and schools, family centres, paediatricians) as well as recreational areas and services (e.g. parks, playgrounds, organised activities), where families can meet and exchange parenting experiences and advice (Berns, 2015[225]). Special attention should be given to restructuring dangerous, deprived neighbourhoods as they can impede with parenting and exacerbate its impact (Goldner et al., 2016[184]; Lima et al., 2010[185]). Connecting professionals working with parents is key, so that insecure or struggling parents are referred to the support needed (e.g. therapeutic, health or parenting advice). Reducing the physical distance of services such as offering services under one roof

(family centres) seems particularly promising (Gillespie, 2009[226]; Statham, 2000[227]). Early warning systems should be in place to avoid child harm through severe physical punishment, emotional abuse or neglect (Helming et al., 2007[228]).

4. **Promoting beneficial parenting approaches through various initiatives:** Increased efforts are needed to counterbalance heated debates and expose parenting myths and misinformation spread on social media or other media. Parenting programmes and low-threshold initiatives (e.g. campaigns, distributing printed material, hosting information event in schools and community centres) should promote need-supportive parenting (i.e. warm parenting that provides structure and grants autonomy) while discouraging need-thwarting and harmful parenting behaviours (e.g. neglecting, rejecting, pressuring, inconsistent parenting) (Henricson and Roker, 2000[229]; Shulruf, O'Loughlin and Tolley, 2009[218]). Furthermore, overparents need help in finding the right balance between caring, protection and structure, on the one hand, and autonomy granting, on the other hand.

5. **Ensuring high-quality and affordable programmes:** Parenting programmes can be effective in supporting parents of children and adolescents but quality on the market varies (Sandler et al., 2011[230]; de Graaf et al., 2008[231]; Vlahovicova et al., 2017[232]; Kevin, Mcglynn-Wright and Klima, 2013[233]; Henricson and Roker, 2000[229]). Communities can support parents by implementing high-quality, affordable programmes and regulating the private market, to the extent possible. Evaluation studies should have proven that offered programmes effectively promote behaviour that improves parent-child-interactions, relationship quality and child development. Programmes should not only educate parents but provide practical, guided training (e.g. modelling of concrete strategies and behaviours) and ensure the transfer of acquired knowledge and skills (e.g. work with parents in their home, assign "parenting homework" to parents, provide parents with practical tools to reflect on their parenting) (Sanders, 1999[234]).

6. **Designing approaches that are strength- and community-based, family-centred and enable individualised support for all families:** Support offers to families should build on the needs as well as existing or latent strength and resources of families and communities, instead of focusing on deficits and problems (Cadima et al., 2017[235]; Trivette and Dunst, 2014[236]). Community stakeholders should be involved in the design and implementation process. Rather than pre-defined and agency-driven allocations of services, existing services can be flexibly allocated, based on the individual needs stated by the family and professionals (e.g. challenging temperament or health condition of children, substance abuse in the family) (Cadima et al., 2017[235]; Trivette and Dunst, 2014[236]). Outreach strategies should be carefully designed as targeted programmes, though effective do not often reach those families most in need and uptake is limited by fathers (Moran and Ghate, 2005[237]; Morawska et al., 2011[238]). The use of service workers of same ethnic or socio-economic background resonates with families and facilitates recruitment as well as openness towards change and acculturation (Cadima et al., 2017[235]). Recruitment strategies can also include involving respected individuals within the social networks of families (e.g. teachers and doctors), designing specific activities for fathers as well as the low-threshold strategies discussed earlier (Moran and Ghate, 2005[237]).

7. **Strengthening schools' capacity for family support:** Schools should be supported in their capacity to build strong home-school-partnerships and trusting parent-teacher-relationships out of several reasons: Firstly, the scoped evidence suggest that parents' approach to child raising has important implications for children's success and well-being at school (e.g. for their academic, cognitive and socio-emotional development, school readiness as well as for their self-regulated learning skills). Secondly, the involvement of parents in children's school life and career relates positively to academic achievement of students (Fan and Chen, 2001[239]; Castro et al., 2015[240]; Hill and Tyson,

2009[145]). Thirdly, effective work with parents is challenging for schools and teachers, particularly in terms of connecting to hard-to-reach, less involved families. The evolving literature on intensive parenting, however, highlights the challenges of working with parents of the opposite side of the involvement continuum: Managing expectations and demands of overly involved, intrusive parents can be strenuous for teachers, school counsellors and psychologists (and also for employers) (Howe and Strauss, 2007[241]; Dor and Rucker-Naidu, 2012[242]; Locke, Campbell and Kavanagh, 2012[65]). Different strategies help manage parental involvement and transition phases (Howe and Strauss, 2007[241]; OECD, 2012[243]; OECD, 2010[244]; OECD, 2012[245]).

8.   **Involving teachers and schools in parenting programmes:** Apart from recruitment, teachers and schools can be directly involved in the implementation of parenting programmes for children and adolescents (Petrie, Bunn and Byrne, 2007[246]; Kevin, Mcglynn-Wright and Klima, 2013[233]). For instance, in the Incredible Years programme, developed in the United States, teachers are taught skills and strategies for handling difficult situations, help children develop social and life skills and cooperating with parents. Many available programmes, especially in the United States, take place in schools (Shulruf, O'Loughlin and Tolley, 2009[218]; Kevin, Mcglynn-Wright and Klima, 2013[233]).

9.   **Remaining open to diversity and considering cultural differences in family support:** The expectations towards families and policies developed for them may not fit well with ethnic minority families whose parenting diverge from the dominant approach (Van Campen and Russell, 2010[106]). For example, the content and delivery methods of programmes, many of which were developed with Western parents, may be less acceptable to some cultural groups (Moran and Ghate, 2005[237]). A simple translation of language is not sufficient for a cultural adaptation, where an orientation towards the everyday realities and cultural norms may be needed (Cadima et al., 2017[235]; Morawska et al., 2011[238]; Acquah and Thevenon, forthcoming[247]). Similarly, specific approaches are needed for building home-school partnerships and the working with parents from culturally diverse backgrounds (OECD, 2012[245]; Vazquez-Nuttall, Li and Kaplan, 2006[248]; OECD, 2010[249]). Stereotyping should be avoided at all costs.

10.   **Educating teachers and other professionals in culture-sensitive work with families**: Teachers, principals, school counsellors or psychologists as well as other professionals working with families (e.g. programme staff) need specific training in working with families with diverse backgrounds and needs: They should be sensitive and respond adequately to common parental fears as well as behaviours and expectations of parents varying in cultural and socio-economic background (OECD, 2019[250]; OECD, 2019[251]; OECD, 2019[252]). They also need training in the non-stigmatising work with families. Ethnic minority children could benefit from support in schools on how to manage dual contexts effectively (e.g. different interactions, learning goals and priorities at school and home) and understanding both ethnic and dominant cultural norms of parenting (Van Campen and Russell, 2010[106]).

4.3. Implications for research

This paper provided a structured overview of the existing parenting literature with some limitations (e.g. scoping instead of a systematic, comprehensive review). Additionally, the reviewed parenting literature revealed important research gaps and methodological issues that future research has to address:

1.   **Closing pressing research gaps:** Families are increasing in diversity (e.g. living apart together families, commuter families, same-sex parents, multi-ethnic families, more custodial, single fathers) and technology has changed family lives substantially. These developments are still insufficiently addressed in parenting research. There is also a need for more research on the impact of intensive parenting, especially on concerted cultivation and tiger parenting. Moreover, a greater balanced attention on need-supportive and need-thwarting parenting behaviours across all dimensions is required (e.g. the research on exerting pressure clearly outweighs the evidence on autonomy granting) (Bornstein, 2019[1]; Skinner, Johnson and Snyder, 2005[2]).

2.   **Elaborating on the practical implications of basic parenting research:** The implications of basic parenting research for the development, evaluation, and dissemination of family support programmes should be explored (Acquah and Thevenon, forthcoming[247]; Power et al., 2013[31]). For example, more work is needed in order to understand what constitutes an effective culturally-sensitive parenting programme regarding recruitment, retention and ultimately impact on parenting skills and child outcomes.

3.   **Exploring the generalisability of findings and understanding cultural specificities:** It should be noted that research has traditionally focused on Western societies and Caucasian families (Davids, Roman and Leach, 2016[103]). Research on parenting in other countries and ethnicities is growing (e.g. Asian countries and ethnic groups) but still limited, especially for certain regions and ethnic minorities (e.g. countries and ethnic groups from Middle East and Africa). Comparative studies such as cross-country comparisons or meta-studies help understanding the generalisability and cultural specificities of parenting and its effects. Yet, meta-studies need to increase efforts to include studies in non-Western countries, which may not always be published in English. Furthermore, cross-country studies require validated measurement instruments that work equally well across cultural groups (Bornstein, 2012[99]; Power et al., 2013[31]).

4.   **Confronting parenting myths and bridging the public disconnect:** There is a need to decrease the gap between concepts and positions on parenting advertised in public (e.g. social media, parent help books), and concepts of parenting supported by empirical research (Schofield, Holst and Murphy, 2016[253]). Researchers should, on the one hand, try to confront parenting myths and misinformation using channels and language that reach parents and professionals. Researchers could, on the other hand, use public debates to reflect on the current state of research: Has research caught up with emerging trends in parenting? Does research sufficiently explore the needs and common worries of 21st century parents?

5.   **Accumulating evidence on intensive parenting and across developmental domains:** Several systematic reviews exist but focus on specific outcomes. Yet, contrasting the relative benefits and harms across different domains would be important to avoid false conclusions. The scoping in this paper summarised the developmental outcomes across domains but search and synthesis were neither systematic nor comprehensive. Meta-analyses, which can inform about the magnitude of effects and moderating factors (e.g. culture, individual attributes), are scarce. Moreover, meta-studies cover insufficiently the evidence on intensive parenting, though the scoping exercise identified several relevant studies and a systematic review and quality appraisal of studies would be valuable for research.

6.   **Sharpening the clarity of concepts, their theoretical underpinning and operationalisation:** Parenting concepts lack sufficient clarity and, unsurprisingly, operationalisation varies substantially. This is particularly obvious for the more recent parenting concepts (e.g. helicopter parenting, concerted cultivation, tiger parenting and

overparenting), though classic parenting concepts also lack precision, e.g. behavioural control (Bornstein, 2019[1]). Research on styles and dimensions are both valuable as they serve different purposes. Yet, the line between the two gets blurred. Sovet and Metz (2014[71]), for instance, discussed authoritative and authoritarian parenting based on separate results for warmth and control. Equally misleading are (meta-) studies that build composite scores of "negative and positive parenting styles", "unsupportive parenting" and "adaptive parenting" across different parenting behaviours (e.g. Lei et al., (2018[183]; Chen et al., 2018[254])), based on a presumption of their developmental effects. In light of the cultural and further variations discussed here, this seems not advisable. Structured overviews of the different parenting concepts and how they relate to each other are rare but render the field a great service (e.g. Skinner, Johnson and Snyder (2005[2]; Soenens and Beyers, 2012[49])).

7.   **Understanding the additive impact of multiple caretakers:** Most parenting research still focuses on mothers. Research on fathers has grown but little is known about parenting influences beyond the parent-child dyad and outside of the household (Power et al., 2013[31]). In many countries, children spend substantial amounts of time with caregivers other than parents (e.g. teachers, siblings, other relatives and neighbours) (Bornstein, 2012[99]). Equally important, many children experience different family living arrangement throughout their childhood (Miho and Thévenon, 2020[16]). Future research should take an "enlarged family systems perspective" (Bornstein, 2012, p. 218[99]): How do the ''parenting'' approaches of all caretakers involved in raising a child impact a child's development? This should include an exploration of how parenting approaches beyond the home influence child-parent interactions and child outcomes (Pellerin, 2005[255]; Power et al., 2013[31]).

8.   **Further discovering contextual factors that explain parenting and its differential impact:** Sections 2 and 3 have exemplified how a consideration of contextual and individual factors has improved the understanding of both, parenting and its effects (Smetana, 2017[11]). Studies on parenting trends and factors relating to the wider context (e.g. factors relating to labour market and educational systems) are extremely rare but particularly valuable for policy-makers. Sometimes, however, they use rather crude parenting measures (e.g. parenting goals as a proxy for parenting style) (Doepke and Zilibotti, 2014[54]).

9.   **Designing new measurement approaches and tools:** Reliable, valid and comparable short-forms of well-established parenting instruments are needed for large international or national surveys where parenting is not the main focus. Short-forms would also be valuable for screenings to identify parents for targeted programmes and evaluations of parenting-related interventions. Emerging electronic and web-based technologies enable a range of new assessment methods. Smartphones and tablets, for example, allow for repeated, real-time collection of audio and video data in the home environment. Such "ecological momentary assessments" (Power et al., 2013, p. 91[31]) can reduce recall bias and maximise practicability and ecological validity of measurements. Having practicable online and offline tools available would also allow practitioners and parents to conduct formative assessments and reflect on the progress in parenting programmes (Sanders, 1999[234]; Caron, Bernard and Dozier, 2018[256]).

10.   **Producing more long-term longitudinal evidence and experimental evidence:** A lot of evidence on parenting is cross-sectional in nature and the existing longitudinal evidence is often restricted in length. Moreover, experimental research is missing but could help understand the directions of effects (Thirlwall and Creswell, 2010[257]; Slep and O'Leary, 1998[258]). Experimental and observational research also enables to explore how parenting approach is influenced by situational cues, states and decisions (Metsäpelto,

Pulkkinen and Poikkeus, 2001[259]; Thirlwall and Creswell, 2010[257]). Thus far, research on the flexibility in parenting approach (i.e. how parents adapt their approach to varying situational demands) is insufficient.

11. **Further improving the methodological quality of studies:** Further aspects of design and methodology of existing research could be improved that have not been mentioned so far. First of all, sample sizes varied considerably for studies and was rather small in some cases. The review also showed that contextual and individual covariates need to be considered in parenting research, which is not always the case. Information on parenting approaches stems mostly from child or parent questionnaires. A triangulations of data collected through multiple methods (questionnaires, observations, journals) and sources would increase the validity of results (Power et al., 2013[31]). Research would also benefit from implementing more high-quality qualitative studies and mixed-method studies to explore the beliefs, motives and cultural norms underlying parenting approaches and acculturation processes of immigrant families (Barker and Cornwell, 2019[260]; Salami et al., 2017[261]).

4.4. Final conclusion

In sum, the existing evidence highlights the importance of parenting approaches for the development of children and adolescents across various domains. Warm parenting that provides children with age-appropriate autonomy and structure is key for a healthy and prosperous development of children. The parenting approach adopted by parents but also its effect varies and research pointed to various contextual factors (e.g. culture, socio-economic factors, support within the community and family) and individual factors (e.g. gender, personality and health condition of children and parents) explaining these variations. A systematic consideration of such factors not only sharpens the scientific understanding of parenting and its impact but also helps improving family policies and support (Mitchell, 2012[262]). To inform policy making, practice and science, however, research needs to increase efforts to:

- Close research gaps, elaborate the practical implication of basic parenting research, and explore the generalisability of findings across cultures, developmental domains and all key figures involved in raising a child.

- Strengthen the methodological soundness and diversity of studies as well as the measurement of parenting approaches.

- Improve the conceptual clarity of parenting concepts, the comparability of their operationalisation, and the scientific understanding of how different concepts relate to each other.

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Annex A. Tables

Excel spreadsheets with Tables are available on the homepage of the 21st Century Children project under the following address: http://www.oecd.org/education/ceri/wkp-why-parenting-matters-in-the-21st-century.htm

Table A A.1. Overview of studies included in the scoping review

Table A A.2. Findings for the associations between the different parenting approaches and child outcomes