Parents and Friendships: How parenting styles influence the child’s friendships

Shannon Graham
University of Wisconsin - Fox Valley
GRAHS2581@uwc.edu

The Meaning of Friendship

The meaning of friendship changes as relationships change, yet friendships are an important part of our human existence. Children learn to be friends because their parents and teachers define friendship for them. Children will accept the adult interpretation as a starting point and then alter the definition to fit their own experiences. This initial transformation of the meaning of friendship becomes the foundation of early relationships. Parents are an important part of this development of friendship for children.

Hypothesis 1
Children of parents with authoritative styles will have more stable and gain friendships.

Hypothesis 2
Children of parents with authoritarian or uninvolved styles will have more loss and friendless relationships.

Results
Hypothesis 1
- Children with Authoritative parents fit into the stable or gain categories
- Most prevalent type of parenting
- Fits with previous research on older children

Hypothesis 2
- Unable to verify
- Only Authoritative parents in study

Participants & Method
Children and parents from 4K and 5K classes
- Parent mean age 33
- Child mean age 4.5

Method
- Interview of parent to assess parenting style
- Teacher evaluation of children’s friendship type

Friendship Types
Stable
Gain
Fluid
Loss
Friendless

Parenting Styles
Authoritarian
Authoritative
Permissive
Uninvolved

Thank you to
Dr. Renee Gralewicz, Jodi Nimann, Jessica Hegman and the parents who made this possible

Sources for definitions: Proulx and Poulin