

Abstract

Autonomy-supportive and controlling parenting, as well as their associations with child development, have been extensively examined under the framework of Self-Determination Theory (SDT; Ryan & Deci, 2000; 2017). From an SDT perspective, parental conditional regard is a controlling practice which frustrates children's basic need for autonomy. Despite toddlerhood being a sensitive period to parental socialization, and to controlling parenting practices in particular, most studies concerning parental conditional regard have examined its consequences in older children.

In the socialization processes, a sense of guilt, admitting a mistake and taking responsibility after wrongdoing, are considered desirable developmental outcomes, while feelings of anxiety and shame after wrongdoing are considered maladaptive and may lead to depressive coping patterns and development of psychopathology among children. The current study examined parental predictors of adaptive and maladaptive responses among 3.5-year-old children after wrongdoing. Specifically, this study focused on first-time expecting mothers' prenatal belief that extrinsic motivation promotes children's development as a possible predictor of maternal conditional regard at 1.5 years of age, which in turn may predict children's non-adaptive responses after wrongdoing behavior at age of 3.5 years.

This longitudinal study included three waves of data collection, in which we examined, through questionnaires, (1) perception of future mothers, during the last trimester of pregnancy, regarding the extent to which children need external motivations in order to develop in a healthy and desirable manner (T1; $N = 294$); (2) maternal conditional regard, when children were 18 months old (T2; $N=192$); (3) Adaptive and maladaptive responses of children after wrongdoing behavior, when children were 3.5 years old (T3; $N = 134$). Findings revealed that mothers' belief in external motivation as measured before birth (T1) significantly predicted mothers' conditional regard towards her child at the age of 18 months ($b = .20, p < .01$; T2). A significant negative correlation was found between mother's belief in external motivation (T1) and children's adaptive responses after performing wrongdoing behavior ($b = -.25, p < .05$; T3) and a non-significant correlation between mother's belief in external motivation (T1) and maladaptive reactions of children after wrongdoing behavior (T3; $b = -.07, p = ns$). In addition, significance was found in the correlation between mothers' conditional regard towards her child at the age of 18 months (T2) and adaptive and maladaptive reactions of children after wrongdoing behavior at the age of 3.5 years ($b = -.03, p < .05$; $b = .30, p < .01$; T3). Finally, the main study findings indicate that the mother's conditional regard towards her child at the age of 18 months (T2) mediates the correlation between the mother's prenatal reports of belief

in external motivation (T1) and children's adaptive and maladaptive reactions after performing wrongdoing behaviors (T3).

This study demonstrates the significance of early parenting antecedents and their potential role in shaping parenting styles and practices. In addition, the study highlights the consequences of maternal use of the practice of conditional regard, specifically during the first years of life, for children's adaptive and maladaptive reactions after wrongdoing behavior.