The Intergenerational Transmission of Parenting: Closing Comments for the Special Section

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Developmental psychology 2009: 45(5), 1276–1283

The 5 studies in this special section both confirm prior findings regarding the intergenerational transmission of parenting and provide important new evidence regarding the intergenerational transmission of positive parenting and the developmental mediators that seem involved in that transmission. Consistent with earlier research, the findings suggest that harsh parenting in the 1st generation (G1) predicts similar behavior in the 2nd generation (G2) primarily through the exacerbation of G2 conduct problems. In contrast, replicated findings in this set of articles indicate that intergenerational continuities in positive parenting likely stem from the social and academic competencies such parenting engenders in the next generation. In addition, these 5 studies demonstrate that the evidence for intergenerational continuity in parenting is robust across diverse study samples, different types of measurement, different lengths of time, and after the introduction of a variety of control variables. Important next steps in this area of inquiry should include the study of moderator variables that will explain discontinuities as well as continuities in G1 and G2 parenting. Also important will be research on genetic and epigenetic processes that contribute to similarities and dissimilarities in parenting across generations.