

Developing Together: A Study of the Developmental Experiences of Adults Who Actively Work to Meet Their Children's Developmental Imperatives

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Abstract

This mixed-methods study explored the lived experiences of adults when they are oriented toward nurturing their child's developmental imperatives. Using naturalistic qualitative methods combined with quantitative measures, the research captures mothers' and fathers' perspectives about their growth and change from their use of child development. Twenty in-depth, semi-structured interviews were conducted with adults who had attended parenting seminars at an Oregon family center and who reported being actively engaged in nurturing their children's developmental imperatives.

Data analysis and interpretation resulted in the identification of five themes: (a) cognitive development in perspective, differentiation from past ways, and new meaning-making; (b) emotional development of trust, empathy, and affective complexity; (c) personal agency of intentional effort and use of critical self-inquiry; (d) development of adult well-being; and (e) emergence of wisdom.

The 3x2 chi square analysis showed that higher levels of competence in child development are associated with personal agency of sustained intentional effort ($P < 0.02$) and wisdom ($P < 0.02$). More research is needed to determine the association between child development competence and adult development. This study showed that adult development is significant in adults who make intentional efforts to use child development practices with their child.

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