Authentic Independence: A Positive Framework for Giving Children Roots and Wings
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Intrusive or Helicopter Parenting
What is Helicopter Parenting and what makes it dangerous?
While the motivations are caring, Helicopter Parents engage in both behavioral and psychological control (Barber, 2006).
Examples:
- Walling college-age child up for class – behavioral control
- Registering college-age child for classes – psychological control

Psychological control undermines negatively with healthy development (Brook, 2003)
- Stifles autonomy, intrinsic motivation and identity formation (Barber, et al., 2004; Barber 2005; Swanson, 2004)
- Encourages behavior motivated by external expectations (Deci, 1995; Deci & Ryan, 2002; Grolnick, 2005)
- Associated with psychological maladjustment (Barber, 2006)
- Disrupts the natural development of autonomy and identity formation in children and adolescents (Baumrind, 2005)

Authentic Independence is the antithesis to parental psychological control.

Authentic Independence Promotes Autonomy
Autonomy is “acting in accord with one’s own wishes” and a basic human need (Brown & Ryan, 2004)
- Provides an element of satisfaction with life regardless of cultures and across different behavioral domains (Brown, et al., 2001)
- Associated with positive outcomes, e.g., self-regulation, internalization, & well-being (Brown & Ryan, 2004)
- Fosters engagement, enjoyment, greater effort, and ability to cope with stress (Brown & Ryan, 2004)

Authentic Independence Promotes Self-Determination
Self-Determination Theory:
- Human motivation related to three basic psychological needs: competence, autonomy, connectedness (Deci & Ryan, 2000)
- At our best, human beings are autonomously motivated to be curious, creative, and proactive, reaching for learning and growing – self-determination (Deci & Ryan, 2000)

Authentic Independence Promotes Motivation
Cognitive Evaluation Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000)
- Intrinsic motivation is a primary and natural drive to be happy, interested and fulfilled.
- While autonomous, intrinsic motivation can be interrupted by external factors like parental control.
- Intrinsic motivation is linked with a number of positive outcomes including creativity (e.g. Amabile, 1990; enhanced task performance (Brook, 2006; higher psychological well-being (Amabile & Baron, 1992)

Conclusion:
AGENCY = Self-Efficacy + Self-Regulation

Agency is doing what we say we are going to do (Bandura, 2003)

Before having the agency to take action toward their goals, emerging adults must first believe that they can take action – self-efficacy.

Performance experiences Successful attempts at control that the student attributes to his own efforts
Vicarious experiences Observations of the behavior of others and consequences of those behaviors
Imaginal experiences Imagining ourselves or others behaving effectively or ineffectively in hypothetical situations
Verbal persuasion What others say to us about what they believe we can or cannot do
Phyiological and emotional states Associated with positive and negative feelings

Authentic Independence: Key Elements & Pathways

For application purposes, we outlined three possible pathways for each of the Four Elements of Authentic Independence. These pathways will be tested for their effectiveness and may be augmented in the future.

References (partial list)

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