

Cambridge Elements

Elements in Child Development

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SOCIALIZING CHILDREN

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CAMBRIDGE
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Cambridge University Press
978-1-108-82703-4 — Socializing Children
Joan E. Grusec, Maayan Davidov
Frontmatter
[More Information](#)

CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom
One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA
477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia
314–321, 3rd Floor, Plot 3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre,
New Delhi – 110025, India
79 Anson Road, #06–04/06, Singapore 079906

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of education, learning, and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org
Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781108827034
DOI: 10.1017/9781108920780

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First published 2021

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library.

ISBN 978-1-108-82703-4 Paperback
ISSN 2632-9948 (online)
ISSN 2632-993X (print)

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Socializing Children

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DOI: 10.1017/9781108920780
First published online: April 2021

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Abstract: Complaints are often made that recommendations about how to rear children are contradictory and, therefore, not helpful. In this Element we survey the history of theory and research relevant to childrearing in an attempt to show how apparent differences can be resolved. We suggest that socialization occurs in different domains, with each domain fostering socialization in a different way. Thus, there is no all-purpose principle or mechanism of socialization but, rather, different forms of relationship between child and agent that serve a different function, involve different rules for effecting behavior change, and facilitate different outcomes. Using this framework, we survey research relevant to different domains, including the roles played by parents, siblings, and peers in the socialization process. We follow this with a discussion of how culture and biology make their contribution to an understanding of domains of socialization.

Keywords: socialization, parenting, internalization, peer and sibling influence, biological factors

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ISBNs: 9781108827034 (PB), 9781108920780 (OC)
ISSNs: 2632-9948 (online), 2632-993X (print)

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