Raising Sons and Daughters in African American Families: A Within Family Exploration of Parental Differential Treatment  
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Project Funded by NICHD Grant R01-HD32336, Ann C. Crouter & Susan M. McHale, Co-Principal Investigators

BACKGROUND

Participants
- Participants were mothers, fathers, and two offspring from 184 African American/Black, working/middle class families.
- Average age of older sibling = 14 (47% female); younger sibling = 10 (54% female).

Procedures
- Families were interviewed over the phone in a series of seven nightly calls (5 weekdays, 2 weekends).

Measures
- Parental Knowledge: Parental knowledge reflected the extent to which parent and adolescent reports of youths’ daily activities and experiences matched. Higher scores reflect greater knowledge.
- Parental Time: Youth’s report of time spent in activities with their mother or father were aggregated across the 7 telephone interviews to create indices of total alone time with mothers and fathers. Higher scores indicate more time (in minutes) spent together across the 7 days.

RESULTS

• Data were analyzed with a series of mixed-model ANOVAs. Gender composition of the sibling dyad served as the between-subjects factor and birth order served as the within-subjects factor.

• Time with Mothers
  - Birth order X gender constellation, F(3, 184) = 11.49, p < .001
  - Mothers spent more time with their younger children, especially in older brother-younger sister dyads
  - However, in older sister-younger brother dyads, mothers spent approximately twice as much time with their daughters compared to their sons
  - See Figure 1

• Time with Fathers
  - Birth order X gender constellation, F(3, 181) = 6.06, p < .001
  - Fathers generally spent more time with their younger children
  - However, in mixed-sex dyads fathers spent more time with their sons than with their daughters
  - See Figure 2

• Mothers’ Knowledge
  - Birth order X gender constellation, F(3, 173) = 2.86, p < .05
  - Mothers generally had greater knowledge of younger siblings activities, especially in older brother-younger sister dyads.
  - However, in older sister-younger brother dyads, mothers had greater knowledge of their older daughters’ activities.
  - See Figure 3

• Fathers’ Knowledge
  - Birth order, F(1, 148) = 7.11, p < .01
  - Fathers had greater knowledge of their younger child’s activities.
  - See Figure 4

• Results indicate that when parents have the opportunity to gender-type their socialization (i.e., in mixed-sex dyads), they do.
• Support for the notion that African American mothers “raise their daughters” was particularly evident in older brother-younger sister dyads.

• Future research should examine how parental differential treatment is linked to adolescent adjustment.
• This study made an important contribution by examining both mothers’ and fathers’ differential treatment in African American families.

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Discussion

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