2ND EDITION

CHILD DEVELOPMENT

UNDERSTANDING A CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE

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kin terms could be used for the same person, to trace connections through alternate routes. A member of the band might say, "I call him X because he calls me Y," or "because my wife calls him X." In such ways, kinship defined and negotiated mutual obligations that bound together all members of the band.

Kinship "glued together" the world as a cosmos of interrelated entities. Persons, places, animals, and meta-persons all counted as kin. Crucially, hunter-gatherer kinship supported a new mode of reproduction which involved *all* the community in the care and raising of every child. Strikingly, food and care were provided to children by community members who were not their biological relatives. Neither grandmothers nor fathers were particularly prominent care providers (Hurtado, 2000).

Ontogenesis was more complicated than for previous hominins, but this mode of reproduction was sufficiently prolific and coordinated that hunter-gatherer communities—very small by today's standards but complex compared with their predecessors—could sustain themselves for 100,000 years. Hunter-gatherers had a remarkably high fertility rate (the average number of births per woman). By puberty, which was marked by rites of initiation and purification, a young woman was often married, typically to a man ten years older, and had a child within a few years (Konner, 2010). A band could have a total fertility rate as high as 7 or 8, and such fertility could double a community in size every 25 years (Pennington, 2001). Consequently a principal concern for hunter-gatherers was preventing their population from growing.

Hunter-gatherer children, like children today, had a short infancy followed by a childhood stage when they still needed prepared food, then a juvenile stage which ended with a comparatively late puberty, marked by a spurt in growth. Children were nursed for a comparatively long time and mothers maintained low weight and body fat, all of which reduced fertility. In addition, infanticide, abortion, and birth control were used, so that births were spaced every 3 or 4 years (today the Aché, hunter-gatherers in Paraguay, still kill babies that are born deformed, or feet first, or premature, without hair, or one of twins). A female would generally be nursing an infant and also have a toddler in tow, perhaps two, along with an older child, partly because hunter-gatherers had low rates of infant mortality. An advanced form of parallel reproduction had evolved.

CASE STUDY: INTRODUCING THE EFE HUNTER-GATHERERS

The Efe are small-stature indigenous hunter-gatherer people who live in the African country of Congo (formerly Zaïre). Since the 1920s they have been studied by anthropologists, who believe that their way of life resembles that of the first *Homo sapiens* (e.g., Tronick et al., 1987; Morelli et al., 2014). The Efe live in the rainforest that covers 240,000 square kilometers on the rim of the basin of the Congo River, which is the world's second largest river basin. (The Amazon basin is the largest.) Adult Efe men are on average only 142 cm tall (4 feet 8 inches), and women are only 138 cm (4 feet 6 inches). A total of four small-stature groups live in this forest: the Mbuti, the Sua, the Aka, and the Efe. These four intermarry, but they have different languages, practices, and means of subsistence.

The Efe live in bands of one or more extended families, which can be as small as six people or as large as fifty. The average family size has been calculated to be 6.6 persons, with an average age of 26.6 years.

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That figure includes children: the average age for adults is 34.7 years, with 16 percent of the population being 50 years of age or more (Migliano et al., 2007).

The Efe are semi-nomadic; they will build a camp to live for a month or two and then move, often when the weather changes from rainy to dry. However, each band stays within a specific territory, their home range within the forest.

An Efe camp is composed of small round huts made of saplings and leaves, arranged in a semicircle in a small clearing. Each hut houses a family group, whose infants and young children are free to explore other parts of the camp. Most everyday activities occur in the communal space between the huts. People gather in this space, making utensils to cook, to gather, or to hunt, and preparing food.

In the forest the temperature ranges from 25C to 32C, and cold nights alternate with hot and humid days. Since it is close to the equator, the day length varies by no more than an hour during the year. The forest receives 1700 mm of rainfall annually, with a wet season between September and December. Between December and March, however, there is little rain, and the Efe's foraging varies with these changes.

The forest is a difficult place to live, with many diseases and parasites. Insect bites, cuts, and burns are common, and there is a risk of falling branches. However, there is a rich, diverse variety of plants and animals, including thirteen species of primate. Despite this, though, food is not abundant. It is hard and time-consuming to obtain, and then requires extensive preparation.

Efe men hunt many species of animal, using bow and poison-tipped arrows, accompanied and assisted by dogs. Spears are the weapon of choice to hunt pigs or elephants, though these animals are rare. Men from several camps often come together for cooperative hunting, with up to forty participants. Meat from the hunt is shared with each man's immediate family and other relatives. The men also gather honey, climbing perhaps 100 feet into the trees to find the hives of wild bees.

Much of the available plant food is not very nutritious. Nonetheless, women's gathering is the principal form of subsistence: it provides 69 percent of the calories in the Efe's diet and 88 percent of the carbohydrates. Women also plant and harvest some vegetables, and they will fish in the narrow streams, trapping or scooping out fish and crab. Four major rivers and multiple streams run through the forest.

In addition to being skilled hunters and gatherers, the Efe are socially skilled. They are highly cooperative and sharing, and loyal to one another, especially to their relatives. Every member of the band is expected to contribute to the group, and there is continuous social contact and interaction among community members.

Each of the four small-stature groups has a close association with a tribe of forest horticulturalists. The Efe are linked with the Lese, who live in villages and were probably the first farming inhabitants of the forest. The Efe exchange surplus meat, honey, and indigenous medicines with the Lese, and will receive in return fruits and vegetables from their farms, pots and pans, spoons, machetes, cloth, and metal. The Lese clear forest areas and plant vegetables such as banana, yam, cassava, and sesame. Sometimes the Lese have little to exchange and the Efe go hungry.

In the early twentieth century, the colonial powers forced the Lese to relocate and farm cash crops, such as cotton, rice, palm oil, and coffee. As a consequence they began to hire the Efe as paid laborers. Efe women worked to harvest rice early in the year, while Efe men helped cut trees and clear land for the following year's crops. Today, however, the road to the Lese villages has fallen into disrepair, crop prices have collapsed, and Efe labor is rarely needed. As a consequence, during the "hunger season" an Efe band may have to split up so its members can travel to other camps with more resources, or so they can seek temporary cash work in a Lese village.

see the Nso mothers shaking and bouncing their babies, but they made only general comments. One mother said, "You have the feeling that they like each other very much." The Nso mothers were more outspoken. They agreed that "the Germans can show a very bad example of child care" (p. 409). One explained, "It is when the mother shakes the child, lifting him up and down that he feels the love of the mother and this fosters the child's growth" (p. 405).

Figures 4.13 shows frames from the researchers' videos that illustrate how body stimulation encourages Nso infants' motor development. Figure 4.14 shows a video frame illustrating face-to-face interaction between a German mother and her infant.

Figure 4.14 Frame from researchers' video of a German mother engaging her infant in face-to-face interaction

Source: Keller (2003)

CASE STUDY: INTRODUCING THE NSO FARMERS

The Nso people live in the Central African country of Cameroon, on land that is largely savannah with patches of forest. They are the largest of more than 200 tribal groups in Cameroon: a total of 250,000 people in a territory of 2,300 square kilometers. Their economy is based on subsistence agriculture, growing corn, beans, potatoes, yam and fruits, and other vegetables for their own use, with a little trade. The climate is challenging, with both rainy seasons and dry periods lasting for months. As a result there is only a single harvest each year, and usually food has become rationed by the time harvest comes around. A drought or other natural event can destroy the community's supplies.

This kind of settled community has a much higher population density and a more complex division of labor than hunter-gatherer communities, and tends to develop political and bureaucratic institutions, along with trade links to other communities. The surplus that each compound produces supports the governing elite, which in turn exerts control on the homesteads but also offers prestige and invests in the infrastructure, thereby increasing production.

The Nso are organized as a kingdom, with a traditional political and religious ruler called the Fon, who speaks to ordinary people only through a spokesperson. The community is composed of lineages: descent groups that trace their origins from a known ancestor. The Fon appoints the head of each lineage.

Most of the 217,000 Nso live in villages. A village may cover 20 square kilometers, and contain up to 1,000 inhabitants. Each village is divided into areas which belong to the different lineages. An extended

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kinship group of at least three generations shares a large compound made up of multiple buildings, whose boundaries are marked by roads or paths. Within the compound, each family of parents and children has an individual sleeping house. But kitchens, parlors, and open courtyards are shared by everyone in the compound, and this is where most daily activities take place, and where food is cooked and eaten. The compound is a community of interconnectedness and interdependence. Most compounds do not have electricity and many are not connected to piped water. Farmlands are located outside the village, but each compound includes a small plot of land.

The Nso are rooted in their past, guided by their customs and conventions (Keller, Abels et al., 2005). Each lineage is organized hierarchically, based on seniority, and the Nso believe that elders should be obeyed and respected. Everyone knows their role and obligations. Men's roles are inherited, or assigned by the Fon. Women's roles are defined by marriage and childbirth. The head of each lineage is male, and each family group is headed by the father, who is responsible for all major decisions in his branch of the lineage. Men are responsible for any difficult and unplanned tasks, and they also have responsibilities in ceremonies. Women are responsible for all everyday tasks in the compound, including childcare. Women also bear the major burden of work in the fields, though men bring home the harvest and some weave, carve, or make furniture. However, women also form groups that save money and lend it to the members, which provides them with some financial independence and power in the face of the patriarchy of the clan. Women also sell some of the crops and crafts at local markets, and coffee beans are sold to a local cooperative. There is very little work for wages.

The wealth of an adult male Nso is measured in terms of raffia palm, coffee plants, forest land, and children. A child is considered to be a reincarnation of an ancestor, and a gift from god. A woman's pregnancy is a matter for the whole collective, who support, educate, and care for her. Most babies are delivered at a local health center, attended by a nurse or traditional midwife. Some expectant mothers go to a US-run hospital a few miles from the village. Prenatal problems and birth difficulties may be interpreted as signs that a link with ancestors has been broken.

The birth is celebrated with gifts for mother and baby, and nutritious food that will support successful breastfeeding. Naming a baby defines its membership of the community; a child who dies before receiving a name will not be mourned. Frequently a child will be named after an ancestor. The infant's behavior is interpreted as containing messages from the ancestors. The infant sleeps against the mother's back as she faces the door to protect against evil spirits. Magical amulets are worn and rites are followed to avoid the infant losing connection with the lineage.

Care for the infant is primarily the responsibility of the mother because she is breastfeeding, though she will turn to female relatives or her older children for help when she is busy with household chores. When the infant is aged 3 months the mother will return to work on the farm. She will take the infant with her, and leave them sitting at the edge of a field with an elder child while she works. An infant is rarely out of her mother's sight, and is almost always in someone's care. The interconnectedness of the community creates a system of shared care.

The infant is given the breast whenever she cries or smiles, or when her mother simply feels that she needs it. Breastfeeding is believed to be crucial for a child to realize their potential. Nso mothers provide indulgent caregiving; they are nurturant and affectionate with their infants, and they expect obedience and respect in return.

Critics argue that attachment theory takes for granted a Western middle-class emphasis on independence and autonomy, and has defined parental sensitivity and optimal parent–child interaction on the basis of that presumption. If that is the case, then "attachment theory as it stands does not adequately reflect cultural variation in relationship development" (Keller, 2013, p. 179). The risk is that "what is normative in one cultural environment is regarded as a pathological condition in another" (2013, p. 182).

> attachment research may legitimately be seen as imposing on the study of normal personality differences a form of moral evaluation framed in terms of mental health and psychopathology and claiming the authority of biomedical science for what are basically moral judgments. (LeVine & Norman, 2001, p. 97)

There is a pressing need to reconceptualize attachment theory to acknowledge the ways cultures define different pathways for children's development, and the ways caregivers use the proximal and distal styles of interaction (see Figure 6.6).

	Western urban middle class	**Subsistence farming rural villagers**
Cultural model	Psychological autonomy	Hierarchical relatedness
Caregiving style	Distal style	Proximal style
Attachment	Dyadically co-regulated emotional bond	Social bond based on physical availability and instrumental care (e.g., feeding)

Figure 6.6 Cultural models, caregiving styles, and attachment

Source: Based on Keller (2002)

CASE STUDY: NSO TODDLERS

During the first year or two of a Nso child's life, a principal concern of caregivers is with their health and survival. Infant mortality is around 95 per 1,000. This continues in the second year of life, unless the mother has another child (Nso women have on average five children, though not all will live). A toddler is allowed to move freely around the compound, and will understand that the other children they encounter are kin. Indeed, toddlers are cared for by the whole complex family network. They learn language not only from mother and siblings but also from peers and other adults.

Nso mothers believe that their toddler should be calm and adjust easily to strangers. Unfamiliar people are not viewed as a threat. Indeed, the Nso are hospitable to strangers, always keen to invite them to share a meal and strike up a friendship.

In addition, Nso mothers say they want their toddler to grow up with many caregivers because the child should love everybody equally. In fact, many mothers say that they are not the person their toddler likes the best. Most Nso mothers are occupied with many tasks in the household and on the farm, so collaborative childcare makes a great deal of sense. In addition, it accomplishes the integration of the toddler into the larger community, which is highly valued by everyone.

A toddler will return to her mother to feed and sleep, but the rest of the time she will occupy herself with many other people around the compound. She will be expected to greet other people, and to be respectful and obedient with elders. A mother will often place their toddler with other people to accustom her to this, and will be quite strict about the matter. Even a toddler will be expected to perform simple tasks around the house, in part because this will help their motor development.

As a consequence of this kind of care, the majority of Nso toddlers show no emotional reaction to the approach of a stranger (Otto & Keller, 2015). This is amplified by the fact that for the Nso crying is considered a bad habit, and anger something that should not be displayed.

6.2.2 GUIDED PARTICIPATION AND LEARNING BY OBSERVING AND PITCHING IN

Attachment theory offers one way of thinking about the care of the infant and toddler. It emphasizes a key aspect of caregiving—providing the toddler with a sense of security. However, a caregiver is never simply a secure base. They are also skilled in the ways of their community, and they involve the toddler in those ways, in part out of necessity and in part so the child can learn.

We can turn now to a different focus on caretaking, one which highlights the process of **guided participation** between caregivers and toddlers and young children. Guided participation is defined as structuring of toddlers' participation in activities in a way that bridges between their understanding and that of their caregivers (Rogoff, 1990). Adults do not simply respond, sensitively or otherwise, to their toddler's signals; they make arrangements for her to participate in cultural practices, and they also make adjustments as she gains skill and knowledge. The notion of guided participation is intended to emphasize that development is a process in which toddlers are already participants, either central or peripheral, in ongoing activity, and that caregivers provide them with support and guidance. Toddlers participate in cultural activities *as* they learn to manage them, to "appropriate" them.

Toddlers in every culture are involved in the practices of their elders in one way or another. However, there are some important cultural differences in the form of guided participation. Barbara Rogoff and her colleagues studied toddlers in four settings: a Mayan pueblo in Guatemala; a middle-class urban community in the United States; a tribal village in India; and a middle-class urban neighborhood in Turkey. In each case, one or more members of the research team spent time in the community. Fourteen families were recruited in each, and interviews and observations were conducted at the toddlers' homes. Everyday activities were observed, and each family was also given a collection of novel and interesting objects and the caregivers were invited to encourage the toddler to play with them. Differences were found across cultures in the goals of development, in the means of communication, and in adults' and toddlers' responsibility for learning (Rogoff, 1990; Rogoff et al., 1993).

In general, in the middle-class communities (the USA and Turkey) the caregivers played and talked with their toddlers and emphasized the verbal instruction and structuring of each toddler's involvement and motivation. In the rural communities (Guatemala and India), on the other hand, the emphasis was on non-verbal communication, sensitive assistance, and skilled sharing of attention. Those toddlers were embedded in group activity for much of the time, and they learned through what Rogoff called "keen

1 capabilities while the adult provides System 2 abilities to plan and evaluate. The toddler has now separated both physically and biologically from her mother, but has not yet separated psychologically. She still needs an adult to guide her as she seeks what she wants and needs.

Moreover, it has been pointed out that what Bowlby wrote "sounds more Vygotskian than Freudian" (Bretherton, 1992). Unfortunately, in his later writing "emphasizing infant initiative and sensitive maternal responding, Bowlby's (1951) earlier theorizing on the mother as the child's ego and superego was regrettably lost" (p. 766).

It seems entirely possible that when we study guided participation we are seeing this external superego in operation, in practical activities that the caregiver and infant participate in together. Indeed, the reaction of a toddler to separation may indicate her attitude to this external superego. She may experience anxiety at the potential loss of guidance when a caregiver leaves. Or she may experience relief at the freedom from guilt that the external superego had been imposing. After all, Erik Erikson described toddlerhood as the stage in which there is a basic conflict between autonomy on the one hand and shame and doubt on the other hand.

CASE STUDY: EFE TODDLERS

Most Efe infants walk by 10 months of age. Most seem to start walking without having crawled first. They are free to wander as they wish around the camp, though they will encounter plenty of hazards: tree stumps and roots, the cooking fire, arrows, and knives that have been put aside. Toddlers will watch adults at work making tools or cooking, and they are allowed to enter, uninvited, into most of the huts. Mothers know that their toddler will be walking before she has acquired "cleverness." Consequently, everyone keeps an eye on a toddler.

Even at this young age, a toddler will often imitate adult activities in their play, such as pretending to shoot an animal with a bow and arrow. Adults very rarely take the trouble to teach anything: toddlers (and young children too) learn by observing and trying to participate. At the same time, adults rarely play with toddlers. And, interestingly, a toddler won't be interacting with her father any more frequently than she does with other adult men (see Figure 6.8).

At family meals, a toddler is expected to share her food with others. "Mothers will offer toddlers a piece of banana, and extend a hand for a portion of the fruit back" (Ivey, 1993, p. 54). This emphasis on reciprocity continues throughout life. A toddler will be encouraged to join in dance celebrations, draped with flowers and lianas. The Efe infant is already living in a way that is "intensely social, interactive, and interdependent" (Ivey, 1993, p. 54).

When the band is traveling, a young infant will be strapped to her caregiver's hips. An older infant will be carried on the back, or will simply piggy-back, holding on with arms and legs.

Weaning occurs only when the mother is pregnant again, usually during the infant's second year of life. Generally a mother simply starts to ignore her toddler's bids to nurse, or distracts her, but in a few cases she may smear ground chili pepper on her nipples, or ask relatives to care for the toddler for a while. During weaning, a toddler will sleep alongside her father instead of with her mother, and after weaning she will sleep with older children.

By the time a toddler has been weaned, she has become a participant in a group of children of various ages and both genders who she already knows from being cared for by them (Morelli et al., 2003). Her grandmother is also likely to be caring for her, along with other older women.

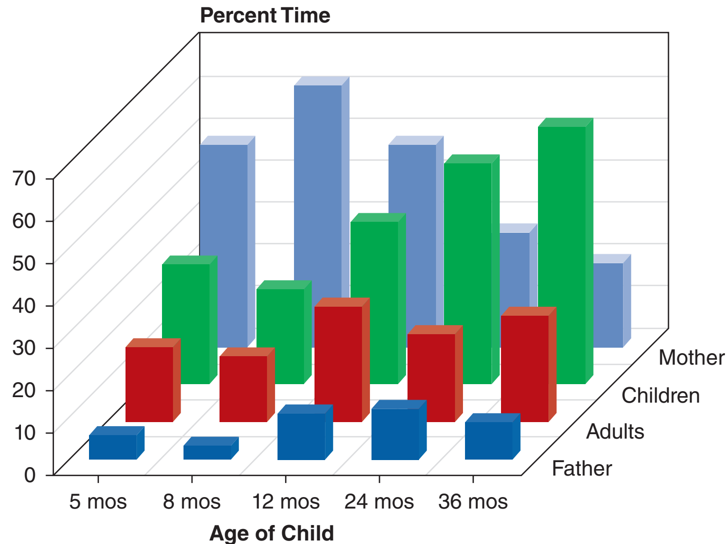

Figure 6.8 The percentage of time that father, adults, children, and mother spend in social contact with Efe infants and toddlers

Source: Tronick et al. (1992)

6.2.3 WEANING

> [W]eaning is not just an issue for nutritionists, biologists, ecologists, and evolutionists but a 'total social fact,' reflecting and shaping perceptions of self, other, relations, and community and providing a mirror for notions and relations of power and coercion. (Bird-David, 2005, p. 40)

Because human children remain dependent on their caregivers for a comparatively long time, meeting their nutritional needs is a continuing concern. Among the issues that confront the caregivers of a toddler is how long to breastfeed, how to combine breast milk with other kinds of food, and when to withdraw the breast. Breast milk provides nutrition and antibodies to the growing child, but providing it places demands on the time and energy of the mother. When and how to wean is a decision based on the needs of both the toddler and the mother, who is often pregnant again and if so will soon have to care for a new baby. It is a practical concern that all caregivers must confront. In addition, weaning usually leads to the toddler finding herself in new social circumstances, often being cared for by alloparents. Why are we discussing infant nutrition in a textbook on psychological development? For the reasons identified in the quote above from Bird-David.

CASE STUDY: EARLY CHILDHOOD IN THE NSO

Care for a Nso child will be indulgent during the first two years of life, and mothers and other carers form a close emotional relationship with the infant and toddler. After weaning, however, caring begins to focus primarily on physical care, and emotional connection is reduced. This is especially the case if the mother now has another child.

During early childhood, it will be with peers that an emotional connection is formed. The young child becomes part of a network of children, of mixed ages and both genders, around and outside the compound, often watched over by grandmothers.

Young children play together at being mother and father, and at activities like buying and selling, hunting, marriage, and traditional ceremonies. They learn from imitation, observation, and trial-and-error.

At the same time, they will help their mother with simple tasks, including carrying a younger sibling while their mother is working. The father's main role is to provide discipline.

In addition, even young children become involved in some of the "fellowship organizations" that are an important part of the Nso community. For example, the Shunghaiy is a girl aged between 3 and 6 who is enthroned at the side of a new Fon. After the death of the Fon she assumes the throne until a new Fon is selected. She participates in state sacrifices, and has authority comparable to that of the Fon himself. The Asheey ver ntoh are boys who from age 5 become custodians in the Nwerong—a political organization that enforces the law, arranges public works, and implements the Fon's orders—and the Ngiri, which has a more ceremonial role, arranging festivals. They assume the role for 9 years, during which time they are not permitted contact with females (Yovsi, 2014).

CASE STUDY: EARLY CHILDHOOD IN THE EFE

From the age of 3, young Efe children are expected to become independent and responsible. They take care of their own bathing, cleaning, and dressing. When they misbehave, they are reprimanded, but gently.

By 3 years of age, a young Efe child will spend most of her time with other children, rather than with her mother or father. Young children are still free to wander around the camp, and can enter any of the huts uninvited. They will play at hunting, digging up plant roots, or preparing meals. The adults find their play entertaining. In camp, they spend most of their time alongside adults who they can observe working, and also join in. There are very few activities where adults focus exclusively on their children (see Figure 8.8); instead the children participate alongside adults in whatever they are doing.

Young children may go with their parents when they gather food, collect firewood, or work in the gardens. They will leave the camp when the women go to fetch water or cut wood, or work in the Lese gardens. Mothers are more likely to be accompanied on such trips by their young girl. A young boy is more likely to be left in the camp, under the eyes of older women or older children. However, it is sometimes

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harder to take a young child on a foraging expedition than an infant, because they may have a hard time navigating forest paths and walking long distances.

Although young Efe children are not yet participating in hunting or foraging, they will prepare and cook food, care for younger children, and add wood to the fire. Both young girls and young boys are expected to help take care of infants and keep an eye on the toddlers. They carry infants, share food with them, and bathe and clean them. They will also be asked to run errands for adults within the camp, fetching a needed tool, for example.

Young Efe children are now eating solid food. This generally has low nutritional value and may contain parasites, and so they are often sick and some may die.

At night, a young child can choose whether to sleep with their parents, or in the hut of a friend or a relative. Parents may also encourage a young child to live with relatives, to foster their independence and responsibility.

A young Efe girl may be promised as a future marriage partner to a male relative in another band, in exchange for the promise of a bride in return. This practice of "bride exchange" is an important part of Efe culture and of the community's mode of reproduction.

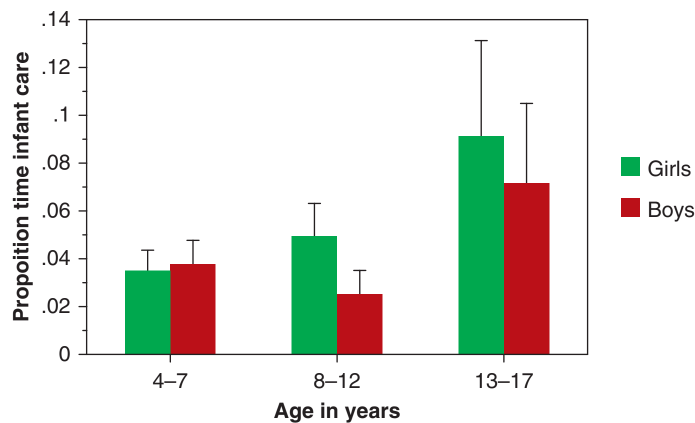

Figure 8.8 The proportion of observed time that Efe caregivers spend in care of children at different ages from 4 to 17 years

Source: Ivey Henry et al. (2005)

8.2.2 EMANCIPATION OR COMPLIANCE?

Developmental science's emphasis on individualism tends to confuse *autonomy* (being separate from other people) with *agency* (acting effectively). Being an independent individual is not the only way to have agency. We saw in Chapter 6 that Nso toddlers are able to regulate their conduct, complying with adult requests and prohibitions, without becoming autonomous and independent. Presumably *both* connection with other people and agency are necessary in human life, and necessary in children's development, and every culture must find a way to combine these two considerations. In addition, a sense of