



Age of Appropriateness for Helicopter Parenting Behaviors

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Introduction

- Helicopter Parenting (HP) occurs when parents exhibit developmentally inappropriate levels of control, problem-solving, or assistance toward their children (Segrin et al., 2012) and is associated with worse adjustment in emerging adults (Schiffirin et al., 2014).
- Most HP scales have been designed for emerging adults (Padilla-Walker & Nelson, 2012; Luebbe et al., 2018; Schiffirin et al., 2019), yet it is unlikely that overparenting only begins after high school.
- A thorough understanding of HP requires recognizing the age at which common HP practices become considered developmentally inappropriate.
- Youth who have more experience with a parenting practice tend to approve more of that practice (Barnett et al., 1996)
- This may work partly through increasing perceived normativeness of such parenting (Gershoff et al., 2010; Rote et al., 2020).

Study Purpose

- To examine the ages at which individuals believe forms of helicopter parenting become developmentally inappropriate.
- To determine whether experience with HP affects the age of perceived appropriateness for such parenting

Methods

Participants

- 233 college students from two central Florida universities
- Relatively diverse (67% White, 16% Black, 18% other; 17% Hispanic)
- Predominantly female (84%)
- Mage = 22.33, SD = 2.93

Procedure

- Participants completed questions on a Likert-type scale or entered a numeric free-response when prompted.

Measures

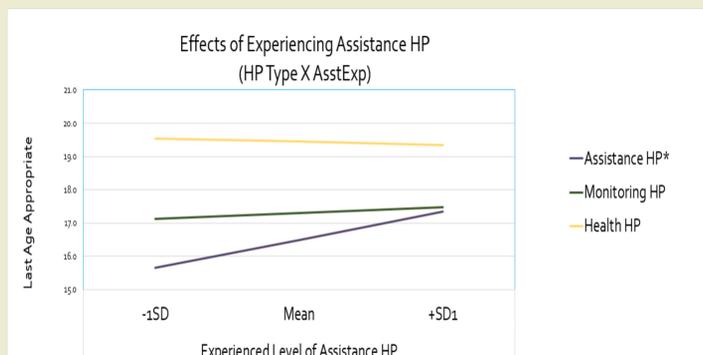
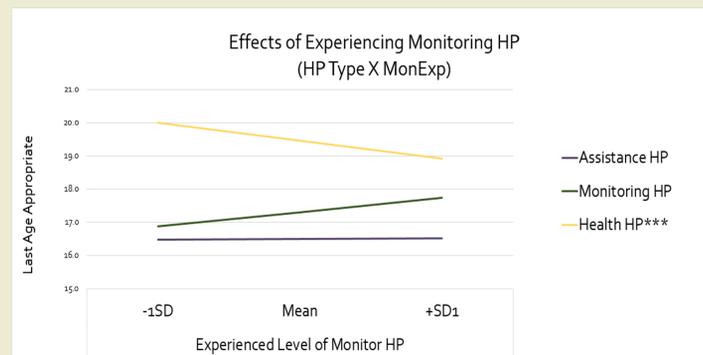
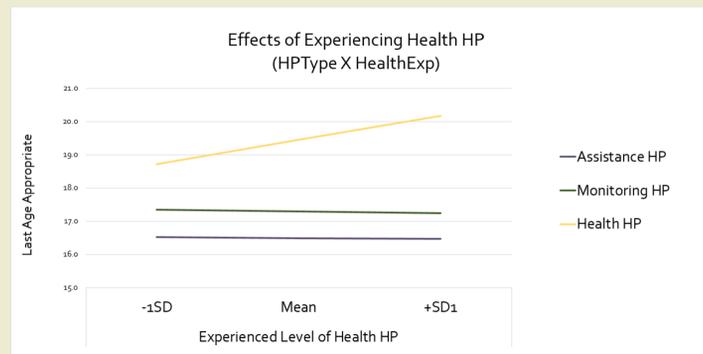
Helicopter Parenting Experience

- Participants selected from a multiple choice Likert-type scale
- There were 35 HP items divided into Assistance, Monitoring, and Health (Rote et al., 2018)
- These were assessed in terms of Experience Level and Last Age Appropriate
- Participants could indicate never or always appropriate
 - 1. Not at all like my parents •4. A lot like my parents
 - 2. A little like my parents •5. Completely like my parents
 - 3. Somewhat like my parents
- Assistance measures-“My parents assist with my academic advising (e.g., calling my advisor, attending advising appointments)”
- Monitoring measures -“My parents monitor or try to decide how much time I spend studying”
- Health measures-“My parents look for doctors, dentists, or other health care professionals for me”

Analyses

- Repeated measures ANCOVA was run on 211 participants with the covariates being assistance, monitoring, and health
- Twenty-two people indicated that HP was either always or never acceptable across all items on composite HP variable. They were excluded from analyses.
- Final sample n=211

Results

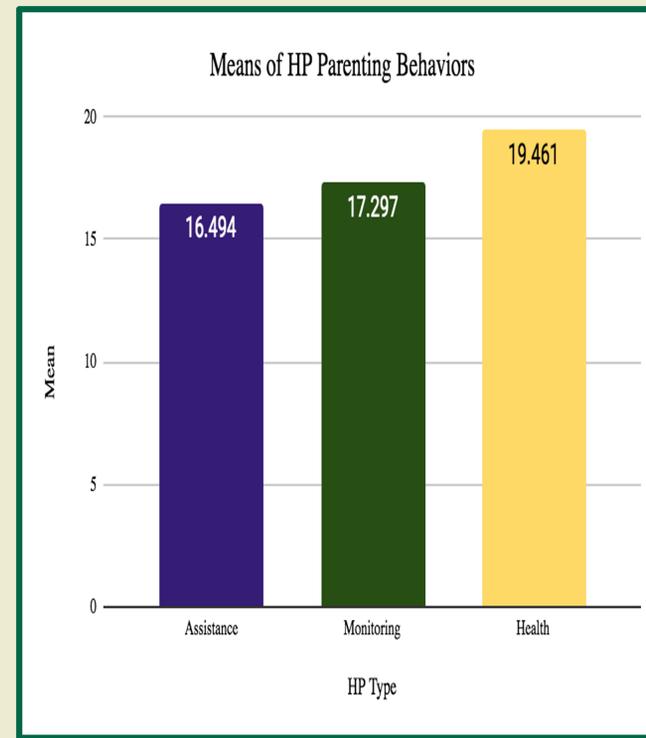


Results Cont'd

Effect	df	F	p	η_p^2
HPtype	(2, 396)	217.74	.000	0.519
HPtype X AsstExp	(2, 396)	6.276	0.004	0.30
HPtype X MontExp	(2, 396)	11.499	0.026	0.019
HPtype X HealthExp	(2, 396)	4.488	0.016	0.022

All means have a significant difference at $p < .001$

*Note: HP Type represents the type of HP for which last appropriate age was rated



Discussion

- A three-way HP type ANCOVA was ran with assistance, monitoring, and health as covariates.
- All covariates were significantly different.
- Participants were allowed to report that it was never or always acceptable and those responses were eliminated for the purpose of computing age of acceptability
- We examined gender and race and found that they did not have significant main effects or interactions
- Cronbach's Alpha was .63 for all covariates
- Seven people reported that assistance was never acceptable, twelve reported that monitoring was never acceptable, and thirteen people said that no health assistance behaviors were ever acceptable
- It was extremely rare for any of the participants to report that a HP behavior was always acceptable.

Conclusion

- On average, there are behaviors that people think are acceptable up until late high school
- Assistance with health behaviors is considered appropriate into emerging adulthood – consistent with health care guidelines.
- This supports that HP behaviors are developmentally inappropriate but are broadly considered appropriate at younger age ranges.
- Experience with HP predicts later acceptance of HP behaviors until a later age but it is domain specific (assistance, monitoring, and health).
- In order to examine over parenting behaviors over time, an effort needs to be made to make a scale that either has different HP scales for age of appropriateness or to make a general scale of behaviors that are never appropriate at any age.

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