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PSYCHOLOGICAL AND PEDAGOGICAL MECHANISMS OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE DEVELOPMENT IN PARENT-CHILD RELATIONSHIPS

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ABSTRACT

This conceptual review examines how parent-child relationships contribute to the development of children's emotional intelligence, with particular attention to mechanisms that can be addressed through family education. Emotional intelligence is treated as a set of abilities related to perceiving, understanding, using, and regulating emotion rather than as a fixed personal trait. It also relates these mechanisms to Central Asian pedagogical ideas on self-control, moral formation, compassion, and family upbringing in Ibn Sina, Al-Farabi, Navoi, and Avloni. Evidence from developmental psychology indicates that children learn emotional abilities through repeated interpersonal exchanges in which parents model emotional behavior, respond to children's feelings, discuss emotional causes and consequences, and provide regulatory support during distress. The review organizes this literature around six connected mechanisms: parental emotional modeling, contingent responsiveness, emotion language and explanation, co-regulation, emotional security, and parental meta-emotion philosophy. Recent systematic and meta-analytic work suggests that these processes are associated with children's emotional knowledge and regulation, although effects vary by method, developmental period, family context, and the specific parenting behavior examined. Pedagogically, the evidence supports emotional acceptance, clear behavioral limits, reflective dialogue, and gradual transfer of regulatory responsibility from adult to child.

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Keywords: *emotional intelligence; emotion socialization; parent-child relationships; emotion regulation; parental responsiveness; family education.*

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INTRODUCTION

Psychological and Pedagogical Mechanisms of Emotional Intelligence Development in Parent-Child Relationships

Emotional intelligence has become a useful framework for describing abilities that allow people to identify emotional information, interpret its meaning, integrate it into thinking, and regulate emotional responses. In the ability model developed by Mayer, Salovey, and Caruso (2004), these processes are related but distinct. For children, their development is not confined to formal instruction. It begins in ordinary exchanges with caregivers, where emotion is named, interpreted, displayed, accepted, redirected, and sometimes ignored. Parent-child interaction therefore provides an early setting in which emotional

knowledge and self-regulation are repeatedly practiced before children can manage difficult feelings independently.

The family context matters because emotional learning is embedded in relationships rather than delivered as isolated information. A child who hears that anger is acceptable but observes explosive or punitive adult behavior receives a different lesson from a child whose parent acknowledges anger while demonstrating controlled expression. Likewise, a parent who asks what caused a child's disappointment and helps distinguish disappointment from anger contributes to emotional understanding in a way that simple reassurance does not. Eisenberg, Cumberland, and Spinrad (1998) described parental emotion socialization through several channels, including parents' reactions to children's emotions, discussion of emotion, and emotional expressiveness. Later work has retained these channels while giving greater attention to parental self-regulation, family climate, developmental timing, and bidirectional influence (Edler & Valentino, 2024).

The educational significance of these processes is substantial because emotional competence supports the interpretation and management of affective information in social settings (Halberstadt et al., 2001). Such a claim does not mean that parenting determines later adjustment in a simple or unilateral manner. Children differ in temperament, parents respond to those differences, and family practices occur within cultural and socioeconomic settings that shape what emotional expression is considered appropriate. Research on emotion socialization is therefore better interpreted as evidence about recurring developmental processes than as a formula for producing a particular child outcome.

The purpose of this article is to synthesize psychological and pedagogical mechanisms through which parent-child relationships can support emotional intelligence. The discussion focuses on mechanisms with direct relevance to family education: modeling, emotional responsiveness, verbal guidance, co-regulation, emotional security, and parental beliefs about emotion. It also considers how these mechanisms interact and where the evidence requires caution. The central argument is that emotional intelligence develops through patterned relational experience: children learn not only from what parents tell them about feelings, but from how emotion is handled when it is actually present.

Historical-Pedagogical Foundations in Central Asian and Uzbek Thought

The modern vocabulary of emotional intelligence is recent, but several concerns now discussed under that heading have clear antecedents in the educational thought of Central Asia. Ibn Sina treated upbringing as a comprehensive process in which intellectual, moral, physical, and psychological formation cannot be separated. In his educational perspective, the child's development is shaped by the surrounding environment, the conduct of adults, gradual habituation, and the maintenance of balance in behavior and feeling (Ibn Sina, 1980). These ideas do not constitute an early theory of emotional intelligence in the contemporary psychometric sense. Their relevance lies instead in the attention given to adult example, disciplined self-management, and the educational environment—concerns that correspond closely to what current literature describes as emotional modeling and co-regulation.

Al-Farabi's account of the virtuous person likewise joins knowledge to character and conduct. In The Virtuous City, human flourishing is linked to the cultivation of dispositions that enable individuals to govern their actions and orient personal aims toward socially meaningful ends (Al-Farabi, 1993). Read pedagogically, this emphasis places self-control within an ethical and communal framework: regulation matters not only because it reduces emotional intensity but because it makes deliberate, socially responsible action possible. Contemporary models of emotional regulation are descriptive rather than moral-philosophical, yet the two traditions meet around the question of how internal states are translated into considered behavior.

Alisher Navoi approaches emotional and moral education through the language of interpersonal virtue. Mahbub ul-Qulub gives sustained attention to kindness, compassion, patience, modesty, generosity, loyalty, and respect for other people (Navoi, 1983). These qualities are not interchangeable with emotional

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intelligence abilities, but they identify the social purposes toward which emotional understanding may be directed. Recognizing another person's emotional state has limited educational value if it is detached from regard for that person's dignity. Navoi's ethical vocabulary therefore adds a relational dimension to the later discussion of empathy, emotion language, and affective social competence.

The connection between emotional formation and family education becomes especially explicit in the pedagogical heritage of Abdulla Avloni. Turkiy Guliston yoxud axloq presents moral upbringing as a practical educational responsibility rather than an abstract ideal, with the family occupying a central place in the formation of conduct and character (Avloni, 1992). This position is particularly relevant to the present review because it directs attention to repeated everyday influence. Children encounter values through routines, correction, adult example, expectations, and patterns of communication long before they meet formal psychological terminology. In contemporary terms, the family functions as the setting in which modeling, responsiveness, emotion talk, and behavioral limits acquire consistency over time.

Taken together, these sources give the article a culturally situated historical foundation. They should not be cited as empirical evidence for the modern ability model of emotional intelligence; that role belongs to contemporary developmental and psychological research. Their contribution is conceptual and pedagogical. They show that questions of self-command, emotional balance, compassion, moral conduct, and the educative power of close relationships were already central to regional discussions of human development. The contemporary mechanisms examined below can therefore be read not as a replacement for this intellectual heritage, but as a more operational account of processes that earlier thinkers approached through moral philosophy, literature, and pedagogy.

Conceptual Framework and Review Approach

This paper is a conceptual narrative review rather than an empirical investigation. It gives priority to foundational theory, peer-reviewed research on parental emotion socialization, and recent systematic reviews or meta-analyses that clarify the strength and limits of earlier claims. Emotional intelligence is used here in the ability-oriented sense articulated by Mayer et al. (2004), while emotional competence refers more broadly to the effective expression, understanding, and regulation of emotion in social contexts. Halberstadt, Denham, and Dunsmore's (2001) model of affective social competence is especially useful for linking these constructs because it treats the sending, receiving, and experiencing of affect as coordinated processes that depend on awareness, contextual interpretation, and regulation.

The review treats parenting as a developmental context rather than as a one-way cause. This distinction is necessary because much of the literature is correlational, measures of parenting differ across studies, and observed associations are often modest. A meta-analysis of preschool emotion-focused parenting practices, for example, found positive associations between parental modeling, responding, and instruction and children's emotion skills, but the average effects were small and became less consistent in adjusted analyses (Zinsser et al., 2021). The most defensible account is therefore mechanistic and probabilistic: certain forms of interaction provide children with more frequent opportunities to learn emotional distinctions and regulation strategies, but their effects depend on the child, the relationship, and the wider environment.

Mechanisms of Emotional Intelligence Development

Parental emotional modeling is one of the earliest mechanisms available to the child. Before children can explain why a person is frustrated or anxious, they can observe what adults do when such states arise. Parents model whether emotion is concealed, amplified, verbalized, tolerated, or acted out. They also model repair: apologizing after an angry exchange, slowing down before responding, or returning to a difficult conversation after calming. Morris et al. (2007) place observational learning and modeling within a broader family model of emotion regulation, alongside emotion-related parenting practices and the emotional climate of the household. From a pedagogical perspective, modeling matters because it turns abstract rules about self-control into visible procedures. A parent who says, “I am

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frustrated, so I need a minute before we decide," demonstrates both emotional identification and a regulatory sequence.

Modeling is not sufficient when children misread what they see or lack language for the experience. Contingent emotional responsiveness provides a second mechanism. Responsive parents notice the child's emotional signal and respond in a way that is proportionate to the child's state and the situation. Responsiveness is not identical to agreement or indulgence. A child's fear can be acknowledged while the parent still encourages approach; anger can be accepted as an emotion while aggression is prohibited. The distinction is educationally important because children need to learn that emotions carry information but do not automatically justify every action. Supportive parental reactions may help preserve communication during high arousal, whereas dismissive, punitive, or escalating reactions can shift the child's attention from understanding the emotion to avoiding the parent's response. Eisenberg et al. (1998) identified these reaction patterns as a central route of emotion socialization, and recent reviews continue to treat them as consequential components of the parent-child emotional environment (Edler & Valentino, 2024).

Emotion language and explanation form a third mechanism. Children need vocabulary to differentiate experiences that might otherwise be grouped under broad labels such as "bad," "sad," or "mad." Parent-child conversation can supply more precise terms and connect feelings with causes, intentions, bodily cues, and consequences. These exchanges are most instructive when adults do more than label the emotion for the child. Questions such as "What changed when your friend left?" or "Were you angry because you lost, or embarrassed because everyone saw?" invite comparison and reflection. Emotional dialogue also allows parents to distinguish internal experience from outward conduct. This distinction supports both emotional acceptance and behavioral responsibility. Zinsser et al. (2021) found that parental instruction about emotion was among the practices positively associated with preschoolers' emotion skills, though the overall literature remains heterogeneous.

The educational value of emotion talk extends beyond vocabulary. Discussing causes and alternative interpretations can change how children appraise events, while discussing consequences can connect emotion to social understanding. This is one route through which emotional development intersects with empathy. Halberstadt et al. (2001) argue that affective social competence involves accurately receiving emotional messages as well as managing one's own affective experience. A child who learns to attend to another person's facial expression, tone, and context is better positioned to respond appropriately. Yet adults should avoid overinterpreting for the child. If parents routinely announce what the child "really feels," they can replace reflection with compliance. Productive emotional guidance leaves room for correction, uncertainty, and mixed emotion.

Co-regulation is a fourth mechanism and is especially important when arousal exceeds the child's independent regulatory capacity. Young children often depend on adults to reduce stimulation, organize attention, provide language, and sequence behavior during distress. Through repeated experiences, strategies that are initially interpersonal can become increasingly self-directed. Morris et al. (2017) describe parenting as a major context for the development of emotion regulation across childhood and adolescence, while Brumariu (2015) links attachment relationships with the acquisition and use of regulatory strategies in middle childhood. Co-regulation therefore should not be confused with permanent adult control. Its developmental purpose is gradual transfer: the parent initially provides more structure, then withdraws support as the child becomes capable of selecting and using strategies independently.

This transfer can be seen in everyday routines. A preschool child who is overwhelmed after losing a game may first need an adult to reduce arousal and supply a simple script. An older child may be able to identify the feeling and choose between taking a break, asking for help, or trying again. In adolescence, direct intervention may become less effective than availability, perspective taking, and collaborative problem solving. The mechanism remains relational, but the form of assistance changes. A pedagogically

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sound approach therefore calibrates help to developmental capacity rather than using the same response at every age.

Emotional security, the fifth mechanism, provides the relational conditions under which modeling, dialogue, and co-regulation can be used. Security develops when caregivers are sufficiently predictable and available that children can seek support without expecting ridicule, rejection, or disproportionate punishment. Attachment research does not imply that securely attached children are continuously calm; rather, security concerns the organization of support-seeking and confidence in the relationship. Brumariu (2015) reviews evidence linking secure attachment with adaptive emotion-regulation strategies. More recent meta-analytic evidence suggests a nuanced association between parental emotion socialization and attachment security: supportive emotion socialization showed a very small positive relation with security, whereas parental elaboration had a stronger association (Rodrigues et al., 2025). This pattern cautions against treating “supportive parenting” as a single undifferentiated variable.

A sixth mechanism, parental meta-emotion philosophy, concerns how parents understand and evaluate emotions in themselves and their children. Gottman, Katz, and Hooven (1996) proposed that parents differ in organized beliefs and practices concerning emotion, including whether children's negative feelings are treated as opportunities for intimacy and teaching or as states that should be minimized or quickly eliminated. These orientations can influence what parents notice, the language they use, and how they respond when the child is dysregulated. Meta-emotion is therefore not merely an attitude; it can organize repeated instructional choices. If sadness is regarded as weakness, for example, a parent may discourage disclosure even when intending to build resilience. If sadness is accepted as informative but temporary, the same parent may be more willing to listen and then help the child re-engage with the problem.

Parental self-regulation connects all of the preceding mechanisms. Emotion coaching is difficult when the adult is also highly aroused. Hajal and Paley (2020) identify parents' own emotional experience and regulation as proximal influences on emotion-socialization behavior, while Edler and Valentino's (2024) systematic review shows that parental self-regulation is related to reactions, expressiveness, and emotion discussion. For family education, this shifts part of the intervention target from how to manage the child toward how the adult manages emotion while parenting.

Pedagogical Implications for Family Education

The psychological mechanisms above translate into several pedagogical principles. The first is to separate validation of emotion from approval of behavior. Statements that identify and accept the feeling can be paired with limits on harmful conduct: “You are angry that the game ended, and you may not hit.” This structure teaches two propositions at once: emotional experience is legitimate, and behavior remains subject to social rules. Such a distinction is particularly important because permissiveness and emotion coaching are sometimes treated as equivalent, although they are conceptually different. Effective guidance combines emotional access with behavioral boundaries.

A second principle is to use emotional incidents as brief episodes of guided learning rather than as lectures. During peak arousal, children may have limited capacity for explanation; immediate support should therefore focus on safety, reduction of arousal, and manageable choices. Reflection is often more productive after the child has regained enough control to think about causes and alternatives. This sequencing is consistent with the logic of co-regulation and with intervention programs that teach parents emotion-socialization practices. England-Mason and Gonzalez (2020) found that such parenting programs can improve parenting behaviors related to emotion coaching, while noting that evidence for direct improvement in children's regulation is less developed. The pedagogical implication is modest but practical: parent education can change adult practice, yet claims about downstream child outcomes should remain proportionate to the evidence.

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A third principle is to build a family language for emotion through ordinary routines. Conversations after school, shared reading, stories about past events, and discussion of conflicts provide opportunities to identify feelings and compare perspectives without waiting for a crisis. These practices can be adapted to family culture and language. Parents do not need to impose a specialized psychological vocabulary when familiar words carry clearer meaning for the child. What matters is increasing precision, linking emotion with context, and allowing children to revise their own interpretations. Emotional literacy develops through repeated use, not through memorizing a list of emotion terms.

A fourth principle concerns the adult's own behavior. Parents can make regulation visible without turning children into caretakers of adult emotion. Brief statements such as “I am getting impatient, so I am going to slow down” model self-monitoring, while detailed disclosures about adult problems may burden the child. Family education should therefore address both emotional openness and generational boundaries. Parents can acknowledge emotion, demonstrate coping, and repair mistakes while retaining responsibility for managing adult concerns.

Finally, pedagogical practice should be developmentally responsive. Preschool children often need direct labeling and external structure; school-age children can participate more actively in identifying causes and selecting strategies; adolescents generally require greater respect for privacy and autonomy. The same parent may therefore move from direct co-regulation to consultation as the child matures. A fixed script is less useful than a stable set of principles: attend to the emotional signal, regulate the adult response, help the child make meaning, set limits when needed, and return responsibility as competence grows.

Limitations and Directions for Research

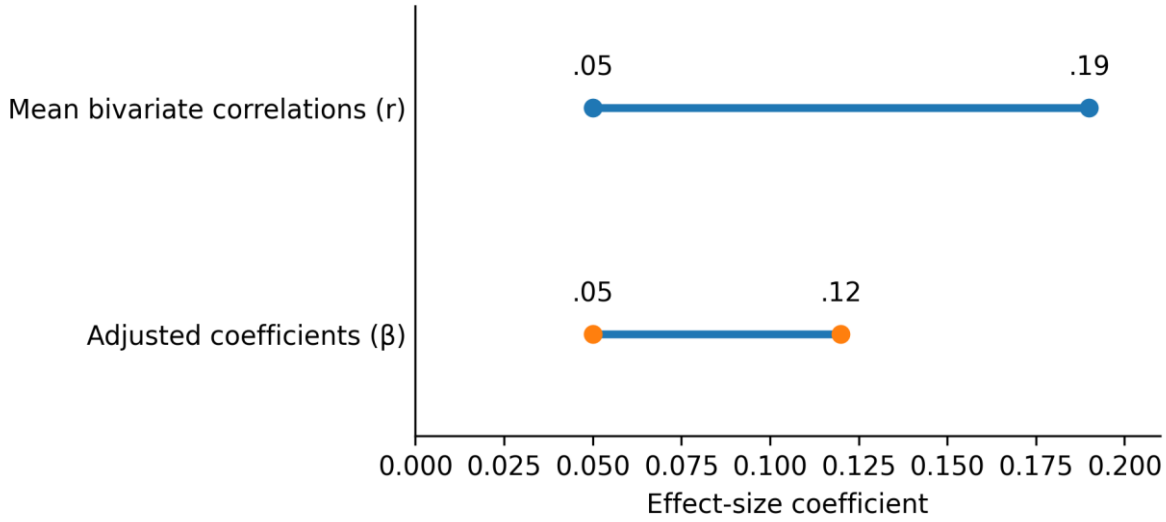
Several limitations qualify the conclusions of this review. First, the constructs of emotional intelligence, emotional competence, emotion regulation, and emotion socialization overlap but are not interchangeable. Studies also vary in whether parenting is measured by self-report, child report, observation, or experimental tasks. These differences can produce apparently inconsistent results even when studies address similar processes. Second, many associations in the literature are cross-sectional or correlational. Parents influence children, but children's temperament and behavior also influence parenting; family stress can affect both. Causal language should therefore be reserved for designs that can support it.

Third, effect sizes are not uniformly large. Zinsser et al. (2021) found mostly small associations between emotion-focused parenting practices and preschool emotion skills, and Rodrigues et al. (2025) reported that some links between emotion socialization and attachment security were small or nonsignificant. Such findings do not make family emotion socialization unimportant. They indicate that child development is multiply determined and that broad labels such as “supportive parenting” may conceal mechanisms with different strengths. Future work would benefit from longitudinal and culturally diverse designs that distinguish specific parental behaviors, test developmental timing, and examine how family stress or child characteristics moderate effects. Figure 1 summarizes the ranges reported by Zinsser et al. (2021), making clear that positive associations can remain modest in magnitude.

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Figure 1

Effect-Size Ranges Reported for Emotion-Focused Parenting Practices



Note. Horizontal segments show the range of mean bivariate correlations (r = .05-.19) and mean adjusted regression coefficients (β = .05-.12) reported across 24 studies by Zinsser et al. (2021). The figure summarizes values reported in the source; it does not present new data generated in this review.

Research also needs stronger links between parent-focused intervention and measured child outcomes. England-Mason and Gonzalez (2020) noted that emotion-socialization programs have evidence for changing parenting behavior, while evidence concerning children's regulation is less extensive. Evaluations should therefore assess whether changes in parental modeling, reactions, and discussion mediate changes in children's emotional knowledge or regulation. This would move the field from general recommendations toward more precise pedagogical mechanisms.

Conclusion

Parent-child relationships provide a recurring context in which emotional intelligence can develop through observation, dialogue, regulation, and relational experience. The literature supports six connected mechanisms: emotional modeling, responsive reactions to children's feelings, emotion language and explanation, co-regulation, emotional security, and parental meta-emotion philosophy. These mechanisms are strengthened or weakened by the parent's own capacity to regulate emotion during interaction. Their effects are neither automatic nor uniform; they operate alongside child characteristics, developmental stage, family climate, and culture. Read alongside Ibn Sina, Al-Farabi, Navoi, and Avloni, these findings also show continuity with a regional pedagogical tradition that places self-control, moral conduct, compassion, and family influence at the center of child formation.

For family education, the most defensible approach is not to teach parents to eliminate children's negative emotion. It is to help families make emotion understandable and manageable while maintaining behavioral expectations. Parents can model regulated expression, acknowledge feelings without surrendering limits, discuss causes and perspectives, provide support during high arousal, and reduce that support as the child's competence increases. In this sense, emotional intelligence is cultivated less by isolated instruction than by the quality and consistency of everyday emotional exchanges.

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