

Parenting Behavior Moderates the Association of Socioeconomic Risk and Infant Emotion Dysregulation

Shawn Parra, Lindsay Huffhines, Jesse Coe, Ronald Seifer, & Stephanie Parade

Brown University; E. P. Bradley Hospital; University of Illinois at Chicago; University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Background, Aims, and Participants

Background:

- 16+ million children in the United States are living in poverty
- Economic hardship is one of the most consistent predictors of adverse child outcomes
- Children with greater socioeconomic risk are more vulnerable to behavioral and emotional problems
- Less is known about factors that buffer children from the effects of poverty in infancy

Research Aims:

- Examine associations of socioeconomic risk and infant emotion dysregulation
- Examine if parenting behavior moderates this potential association

Participants/Demographics:

Mother-Infant Dyads	N=295
Race/Ethnicity	42% White; 40% Hispanic/Latino; 32% Other; 19% Black; 7% Biracial
Education	60% ≤ a HS Diploma
Employment During Pregnancy	65% Unemployed
Marital Status	44% Single
Poverty Threshold	All families living in poverty
Infant's Sex-Assigned-at-Birth	53% Female

Methods

Methods:

- Socioeconomic risk was a composite variable including maternal education, maternal unemployment status, and single parenthood
- 12-Month Observational Assessment



- 7-minute free play interaction: Videotapes of the task were coded to assess the overall quality of observed parenting using the Parent/Caregiver Involvement Scale (Farran et al., 1986)



- 4-minute challenge task designed to elicit infant frustration: Videotapes of the task were coded to assess the observed infant emotion dysregulation using procedures adapted from Leerkes & Wong (2012)

- Observations were coded using INTERACT by Mangold International

Analyses and Results

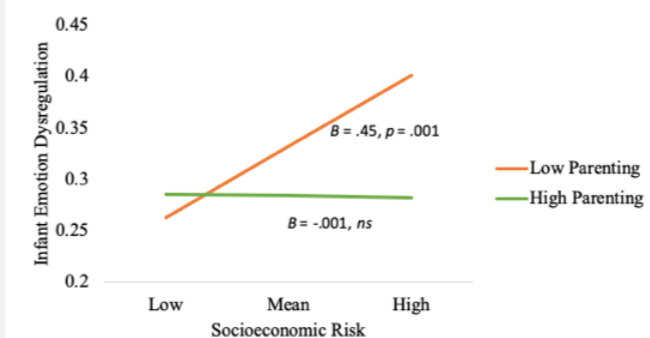
Analyses:

- Partial correlations tested simple associations of socioeconomic risk and observed infant emotion dysregulation
- Hierarchical multiple regression tested observed parenting behavior as a moderator of the association of socioeconomic risk and infant emotion dysregulation

Results:

- Socioeconomic risk was positively associated with infant emotion dysregulation ($r = .28, p < .05$)
- However, there was a significant interaction of socioeconomic risk and parenting behavior in the prediction of emotion dysregulation ($B = -0.06, p < .05$)

Figure 1. Parenting Quality Moderates the Effect of Socioeconomic Risk on Infant Emotion Dysregulation



- Socioeconomic risk was only associated with infant emotion dysregulation when the quality of observed parenting was low
- When the quality of observed parenting was high, socioeconomic risk was not associated with observed parenting

Conclusions and Implications

- Parenting behavior buffers infants from the negative effect of poverty on early emotional development
- Our utilization of observational assessments of parenting and infant emotion dysregulation builds upon prior work that typically uses questionnaires

Implications:

- Results suggest that interventions to support parenting among families living in poverty have the potential to enhance infant emotional development
- Evidence-based treatment such as behavior therapy, relationship-based intervention models, and home visiting, may prove useful in supporting infant emotional development
- Practice, research, and policy should continue collaborating and coordinating to further support families in early childhood

