

Parent induces guilt, child shows distress

March 23 2013

The use of guilt-inducing parenting in daily parent-child interaction causes children distress still evident on the next day, emerges from the study Parents, teachers, and children's learning (LIGHT) carried out by Kaisa Aunola, Asko Tolvanen, Jaana Viljaranta and Jari-Erik Nurmi at the University of Jyväskylä, Finland. According to the study, the use of guilt-inducing parenting varied from one day to another. When parents used higher levels of guilt-inducing parenting on certain days, this was evident as atypically high levels of distress and anger among children still on the next day.

In [guilt](#)-inducing parenting, a parent tries to impact on the child's behavior using psychological means rather than direct limit setting. For example, the parent may remind the child how much he or she makes effort for the child or show how ashamed she/he is because of the child's behaviour. This kind of parenting is typical for parents who are themselves distressed or exhausted. The research by Aunola et al. showed that although the guilt-inducing parenting by both the mother and the father increased the child's daily distress, the role of the father was especially important.

The research project lead by Professor Kaisa Aunola was funded by the Academy of Finland and the Jacobs Foundation. In the project, the daily interaction between about 150 children and their [parents and teachers](#) was followed up across the [first grade](#) of primary school using the diary method. The study by Aunola et al. will be published during this year in the *Journal of Family Psychology*.

Provided by Academy of Finland

Citation: Parent induces guilt, child shows distress (2013, March 23) retrieved 2 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2013-03-parent-guilt-child-distress.html>

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