

# Challenging students benefit from limit setting

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The teacher's interaction style can either foster or slow down the development of math skills among children with challenging temperaments. This was shown in the results of the study "Parents, teachers and children's learning" carried out at the University of Jyväskylä, Finland.

Ph.D. Jaana Viljaranta, along with her colleagues, studied the role of teachers' interaction styles in academic [skill development](#) among children with different temperamental characteristics.

A child's challenging temperament may show up in the classroom, for example, as low task-orientation and lack of concentration, or as a tendency to intense negative emotional expressions. Viljaranta et al. found that a child's challenging temperament evokes two kinds of response styles among teachers. On the one hand, [teachers](#) try to regulate the child's behavior via clear limit setting and instructions, and on the other hand they try to impact the child's behavior via guilt-inducing techniques and by appealing to his/her emotions. In the study by Viljaranta et al., limit setting was found to be beneficial for children's math skill development, whereas guilt-inducing techniques led to slower math skill development especially with girls.

**More information:** Viljaranta, J., Aunola, K., Mullola, S., Virkkala, J., Hirvonen, R., Pakarinen, E., & Nurmi, J.-E. (in press). The role of temperament on children's skill development: teachers' interaction styles as mediators. *Child Development*. [onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10...](http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10...)

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