

Research examines complications during birth and link to later social anxiety in children

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A new study published in *Infant and Child Development* indicates that complications during birth may increase the risk that children will

develop social anxiety by their pre-teen years.

For the study, 149 children aged nine to 12 years were screened for behavioral inhibition—a tendency to exhibit a fearful disposition and withdrawal in unfamiliar contexts and situations—and assessed for social anxiety symptoms using parent- and child-reports. Investigators found that perinatal complications were associated with higher levels of behavioral inhibition and social anxiety symptoms.

Additionally, analyses suggested that behavioral inhibition acted as a pathway between birth complications and social anxiety symptoms.

"This study sets the stage for future longitudinal work examining whether childhood temperament is a developmental path by which birth complications lead to [social anxiety](#) symptoms," said lead author Dr. Santiago Morales, of the University of Maryland.

More information: Gabriela L. Suarez et al, Perinatal complications are associated with social anxiety: Indirect effects through temperament, *Infant and Child Development* (2019). [DOI: 10.1002/icd.2130](https://doi.org/10.1002/icd.2130)

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