

New research into the effects of perfectionistic parenting and its impact on childhood anxieties

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In a new study published in the *Journal of Experimental Child*

Psychology, researchers investigated the impact of perfectionistic rearing behaviors by parents on children. Results showed that while all children showed an increase in their self-oriented perfectionism under perfectionist rearing conditions, it was children in the non-perfectionistic rearing condition that improved significantly in task accuracy performance.

"In our perfectionistic rearing condition, we trained parents to focus on "getting it just right" and to focus on the child's mistakes and the negative consequences of those mistakes. This research found that the consequence of this behavior is that it increased the child's perfectionism but it did not necessarily result in improved performance," says researcher Associate Professor Jennifer Hudson, Macquarie University, Centre for Emotional Health.

The study also looked at the impact of this parenting behavior on a child's anxiety. While perfectionistic rearing had a similar impact on how both anxious and non-anxious children performed, overall self-oriented perfectionism was significantly higher in the anxious group compared with the non-anxious group.

"It is important to point out that there have been several lines of evidence to indicate a relationship between increased perfectionism and higher [levels of anxiety](#)," says Hudson.

The results of this research highlight the potential impact that perfectionistic rearing behaviors may have on the development of anxiety in children.

"These results are remarkable given that they show that even a very short interaction between a parent and child can already affect perfectionism and task performance," says Hudson.

This study is the first attempt from researchers to explore the relationship between perfectionism and maternal anxious rearing behaviors in [children](#). It makes an important contribution to the limited literature available on the development of [perfectionism](#) and also could assist psychologists from a therapeutic point of view in the treatment of childhood emotional disorders.

Provided by Macquarie University

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