

How poverty may affect children's behavior

19 July 2017

Development study.



More information: *Child Development* (2017).
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In a recent study of young children experiencing homelessness, high-quality parenting was associated with better peer relationships and protection from internalizing problems in the context of family adversity. In contrast, risk factors related to poverty were linked with more disruptive behavior and worse teacher-child relationships, even when parenting was strong.

The study included 245 homeless parents and their children, aged 4 to 6 years. The findings suggest that children exposed to high family adversity may respond well to parenting interventions, whereas children in [extreme poverty](#) may benefit from interventions targeting [disruptive behavior](#) and enhancing teacher-child relationships.

"These results emphasize the importance of high-quality parenting for social-emotional development, but also its potential limits. Severe poverty may overwhelm the benefits of strong parenting for children's behavior, suggesting that interventions promoting child resilience need to reduce poverty-related risk in addition to building protective factors in the family," said Madelyn Labella, a doctoral candidate and the lead author of the *Child*

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