

Childhood growth and development literature review examples

[Health & Medicine](#), [Stress](#)



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Introduction

Many a times parents do not realize that their attitudes towards their children is affecting them seriously, which results in impulsive and irrational behavior leading to dangerous consequences. The difference in adolescent behavior can be observed but without the knowledge of the reasons as to why such behaviors are escalating, both parents and teachers are unable to solve them. Hence it is important to study the reasons of such behaviors so that we understand how these individual differences affect children and be able to manage such erupting behavior problems.

Moreover, it is important to identify children and parents who are suffering from stress so that we understand how health care, social service, and education providers can facilitate such parents of adolescents so as to minimize the possibility of developing deviant actions. In addition to this, it is necessary to develop an understanding of issues that contribute to stress in parenting among the families who are moving towards behavioral problems developing in the youth in these families. Several factors are said to be correlated with the effects on adolescents' growth and development, such as

anger, frustration family violence and abuse and so on. In this paper we discuss how the stress of low income single parents, mostly mothers affects their children adversely.

Review of the Articles:

The first article by Lori S. Anderson “ Predictors of Parenting Stress in a Diverse Sample of Parents of Early Adolescents in High-Risk Communities” revolves around factors responsible for high parenting stress. Assumptions of researchers here is that the stress of parenting linked with negative parenting leads to an increase in youth health risk behaviors. The whole study is conducted around the model of Abidin’s 1995, Parenting Stress Index, which shows the multiple factors that lead to parental stress, some of these factors include: Child Factor (age, social skills, problem behaviors), Parents Factor (gender, health status, race/ethnicity), Contextual Factors (Family conflict, family cohesion, social support, parent education, household income, family structure). 824 parents of adolescents between the ages 10-18 years. Among the parents mostly were mothers from racial and ethnic minority groups with low income. Analysis using a cross-sectional questionnaire data, which was collected from sites associated with Cohort III of the Center for Substance Abuse and Prevention/ SAMSHA Mentoring and Family Strengthening Prevention Initiative. Some conditions laid in the study are that families at high risk were targeted for the study only. All the applicants were parent and child dyads where the parents were asked to answer keeping the child specifically chosen for the study in mind. All surveys were completed by the parents and \$20 was paid for their

participation. SAMSHA was the one to provide a design and analysis for the study to maintain the quality across the sites. The data was analyzed by using bivariate correlations and multiple and hierarchical regression to find out the influence of parent, child and contextual domains on parenting stress. On the other hand the connection of parenting stress with single parenting is also analyzed and even involving parental health status, cohesion and involvement. The conclusions drawn were that child factor was 42% the reason of parenting stress, where the problematic behavior and the social skills of the adolescent were more responsible to it than the age. Moreover, the parent factor, consisting of gender, health and ethnicity, was only 9% responsible for parenting stress. However, contextual factor is responsible for 39% of the parenting stress, which consisted of family structure, family cohesion, household income and social support variables that were less responsible for stress in parenting, whereas, family involvement, conflict and parent education mostly affected it. Approximately half of the parents in this study are known to be under parenting stress, where mostly it is because of the behavior of their adolescent which in a way leads to family conflict. Hence parents who are less educated, single, having health issues with children with escalated behavior problems are considered to be high at risk. (Anderson, 2008) Hence when children belong to families of single parents they have more behavior problems than the ones belonging to families with both parents.

In the second article, “ Low Income Mothers’ Patterns of Partnership Instability and Adolescents’ Socio-emotional Well-Being” by Heather J. Bachman, Rebekah Levine Coley and Jennifer Carrano, we find that more

than 12% of the children are subject to three or more than three maternal partnership till they are 15 years old. This is mostly seen in low-income families. Moreover the study states that single-mother households are the most effected by economical inconveniences, hence leading to ineffective parenting and supervision because it becomes difficult for the mother to look after her adolescent all alone. As a result of maternal cohabitation adolescents of such families are known to be problematic and delinquent. However, if the mother is married, to the biological father or a step father, then the adolescent has a better attitude. Moreover this article finds out how maternal partnership instability and family status is related to the socio-emotional behavior of the adolescent. In order to find out the results of the research, data was collected from Welfare, Children, and Families: A Three-City Study, which consisted of 2, 400 children belonging to families with low-income, and their mothers as caregivers. They were interviewed in the premises of their homes. To increase the amount of data pooling was done so that more efficient statistic results are obtained. Wherever the data was absent Expectation Maximization was used. Mothers were asked questions regarding their past lives and so on to identify the longitudinal pattern, then all this data that was collected was divided under nine different categories such as, present status was either single, married or cohabitating, then how long the relationship lasted: always, stable or new. Both adolescents and mothers reported on the different stresses and behavior problems that occurred, by using various techniques to assess these issues. All things such as economic status of the family, mother's psychological behavior and the parenting of the child were questioned to add into the data analysis. The

result of this research study was that the structure and stability of the family for low income groups is essential for the children's welfare. Moreover, longitudinal pattern of the maternal partnership also plays an important role in the lives of adolescents. However, the findings for married mother to step fathers or biological fathers were the same, hence indicating that adolescents are better parented or are less likely to be under stress when both parents are present, but if they are under a single-parent household then the results are the opposite (Bachman, Coley & Carrano, 2012).

Comparing to the previous article by Anderson, adolescents' behavioral problems escalate in single-parent households, is similar to the results of research by Bachman et al., also emphasizing on the point that when both parents live together their economic status is better and hence more satisfaction with life resulting in less behavior problems of the children, which is reversed in the situation of single mothers, because when these factors are missing then stress is escalated which leads to harsh punishment methods used by the mother to discipline the child.

According to Aurora P. Jackson, Kathleen S. J. Preston and Todd M. Franke in the next article "Single Parenting and Child Behavior Problems in Kindergarten" many children born in black families are with single-mothers, facing financial stress and burden of bringing children up alone, use corporal punishment methods to discipline the children. Their father is usually a non-resident working elsewhere with or without contact with the family. Hence many of such children are subject to lack of socio-emotional development. Research was conducted to find out the relationship between toddlers and their parents, which included fathers who were not residents, and such

incidents that affect the child's progress when he is in kindergarten. To further explain the research found out the single mother's stress regarding the parenting of the children and her spanking frequently, non-resident father's contact with his child, mother's satisfaction with the father figure, including the reports from teacher discussing the behavior problems of these children in the kindergarten classroom. Moreover, the mother's education and the gender of the child were controlled because research has shown that lower educated mothers and family procedures inspire boys and girls differently before reaching the age of adolescence. Even the income of the family was controlled using the ratio of income-to-needs. 100 such families were interviewed in order to collect the data for the analysis, even including feedback from teachers regarding the children under observation of the study. The main statistical methods that were used to analyze the data were ordinary least square regression, two-tailed tests and multiple regressions. The results concluded from this survey indicated that when the stress levels of parents was high then children spanking was recurrent, and when father – child contact was seldom then teachers reported behavior problems of such children. Likewise, when the contact between the biological father and the child was more frequent then the harmful outcome of the inconsiderate discipline methods used by mothers was diminished. To sum up, when father –child contact was less than the mothers spanking led to an increase in the behavioral problems of the child, on the other hand, when the contact was frequent spanking was not related with the escalated behavior problems (Jackson, Preston & Franke, 2010). Hence when we compare this research with the previous ones we can say that a mother's stress factors are

associated with being single, having low income and to bring up a child all alone, all these lead towards inappropriate parenting methods which result in escalating behavior problems in the children of such families.

The next article by Melanie Lutenbacher, “ Relationships between Psychosocial Factors and Abusive Parenting Attitudes in Low-Income Single Mothers” discusses the connection between abuse (childhood and/or partner), daily stressors, self esteem, depressive symptoms, and anger with abusive parenting attitudes. The data for this study was collected in the second wave of a three-wave panel study. Only 50 women from a total of 144 completed all the three waves of the study and were included because they were in the criteria: never married, widowed, divorced or were separated for at least 6 months, and were head of household, and their family income was below the level of poverty according to the size of the family, and last, mother was the legal guardian of the child. Among the mothers that were selected for the study ninety one percent had low income, forty two percent lived with partners twice or more time, one third of the women were pregnant and only ten percent were living with cohabitating. What stressed mothers on a daily basis was also found out, such as, financial concern, role overload, employment problems, parenting worries, and interpersonal conflict. Depression, expression of anger was also measured to find out how it led to child abuse. The result of the study was that 65% were a subject to child abuse from which 19% experienced both physical and sexual abuse. Moreover 68% of the mothers had lack of empathy, and 77% had inclination towards corporal punishment. Hence the study concludes that the factors of abuse (parenting and partner) and depression were present

that led to behavior problems in children. More depression and daily stressors led to anger which went on with reducing parental empathy, however, when partner abuse was higher, parenting attitudes were abusive leading to an increase in parent-child role problem (Lutenbacher, 2002). Hence to sum up we can say if the mother is abused by the partner then she is more likely to develop mental problems leading to inappropriate parenting attitudes.

In the last article “ The Influence of Economic Strain, Coping with Roles, and Parental Control on the Parenting of Custodial Single Mothers and Custodial Single Fathers” by Jeanne M. Hilton and Stephan Desrochers describes that since the past decades the rate of divorce has been increasing; creating great affects on the upbringing of a child. Single mothers and single fathers have more negative behavior towards their children. In addition to this, single mothers are more critical with their children and at times less affectionate, whereas single fathers have better approach in children upbringing they have a positive approach towards their children in maintaining a disciplined life. Also economic distress influences the upbringing of the child. Since single mothers are more a victim to economic strain, the single fathers have fewer problems in bringing up the child. In this way quality parenting weakens after divorce. For the research 30 single mother and 30 single father families are taken into consideration. The criteria under which the families were selected were, parents live singly with the child (aged 6-10), the child stayed with the concerned parents for at the minimum of 20 nights in a month, and the third being that the parents are divorced and were never remarried. The data was collected on the basis of

interview and phone conversation with the participant families. The results identified that the single mothers and their children face great problems due to financial issues and it becomes difficult for such mothers to nurture their child resulting in poor child outcomes. Such a situation creates a difficult setting for the parents who live singly. If the father is given the authority of the child he is fully responsible and takes care of the child in a much better manner than a custodial mother. Since it is a man who is the financial support of the family he plays the role of a home maker far better than the mother (Hilton & Desrochers, 2000). Such relationships make it difficult for child care, so it is better that the mother and fathers cope up well with the relationship.

Conclusion

Taking into account the research done in the articles it shows that the effects of low-income single parents are related to the escalating behavioral problems of children. This is mainly because bringing up children alone is not an easy task; hence single-parents are overshadowed by various stressors which lead them towards using inappropriate attitudes towards their children. It can be assumed after reading these articles that adolescent's growth and development are affected when they are in families with single parents, mostly mothers as household authorities with low income. However, more longitudinal studies should be conducted in order to get to the root of the problem. It is important to develop an understanding of the actual thought process over several years of individuals who have different behavior problems and parenting styles. Also parents and other individuals

who play a major part in the participant children's lives should also be taken into consideration. This would help in getting a better assessment of the intensity of the issue and also develop reliability in the results.

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