

Maryam Zarra-Nezhad

Letter of Progress

Asked by Alli Paasikivi foundation concerning my research progress “The Role of Family in Children’s Socio-Emotional Development: Mediating and Moderating Mechanisms: Antecedents and Consequences” I would like to make the following statement.

During the first grant from Alli Paasikivi foundation in 2012 I have finalized my first PhD article “Children’s Social Withdrawal Moderates the Associations Between Parenting Styles and the Children’s Socioemotional Development” and also analyzed the results for the second PhD study “Child’s Temperament Moderates the Associations between Parenting Styles and Child’s Emotional Development”.

The first study investigated the extent to which the associations between mothers’ and fathers’ parenting styles and their children’s socioemotional development are different depending on the children’s level of social withdrawal. Based on the differential susceptibility theory, children with a high level of social withdrawal were expected to be particularly susceptible to parental influence. Teachers rated 273 children three times on prosocial skills, internalizing, and externalizing behaviors during grades 1–3.

Parents filled in parenting style questionnaires measuring their affection, behavioral, and psychological control at the same time points. Teacher reports of children’s social withdrawal were obtained at the end of kindergarten. Results of the panel analysis showed, as was expected, that the children showing signs of social withdrawal benefitted more from high maternal affection than others in terms of low levels of externalizing problem behavior. The role of parental psychological control was more complicated: among children showing a high level of social withdrawal, psychological control predicted high levels of prosocial behavior and low levels of externalizing problem behavior. However, it also predicted increased internalizing behavior problems. Among children showing no signs of social withdrawal these kinds of results were not found.

The first article is now under revision in highly recognized and high impact journal, i.e. Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry and once again I would like to greatly appreciate Alli Paasikivi foundation for supporting my PhD studies.

Sincerely

Maryam Zarra-Nezhad