How Poverty May Affect Children’s Behavior

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 Development* study.

Additional Information


About Journal

As the flagship journal of the Society for Research in Child Development (SRCD), *Child Development* has published articles, essays, reviews, and tutorials on various topics in the field of child development since 1930. Spanning many disciplines, the journal provides the latest research, not only for researchers and theoreticians, but also for child psychiatrists, clinical psychologists, psychiatric social workers, specialists in early childhood education, educational psychologists, special education teachers, and other researchers. In addition to six issues per year of *Child Development*, subscribers to the journal also receive a full subscription to *Child Development Perspectives* and Monographs of the Society for Research in Child Development.

Language: English