

Factors Impacting Emotional Reactivity and Regulation in Young Children

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This study aimed to determine the impact of child IQ, adverse experiences, and parent factors including predictability and emotion regulation on emotional regulation and reactivity in young children (4-7 years). Data was collected from the Wellness Health and Life Experiences longitudinal study with the UNC CIRCLE Lab. Caregivers and their children (N = 88) completed secure online surveys through Qualtrics assessing the child's emotion regulation and emotional reactivity (Emotional Regulation Checklist), adversity experience (StimQ Cognitive Home Environment Questionnaire and Conflict Tactics Scale), parental predictability (Questionnaire of Unpredictability in Childhood), and parental emotional regulation (Difficulties in Emotional Regulation Questionnaire). IQ data was collected via the Kaufman Brief Intelligence Test conducted by trained research assistants. Descriptive statistics, regression analyses, and moderation analyses were conducted in SPSS. Results revealed that threat and child's IQ were not significantly associated with emotion regulation or reactivity. Deprivation and parental predictability were related to emotional regulation, such that more cognitive stimulation and parental predictability were linked to increased regulation in children. Parental regulation impacts both emotional regulation and reactivity, where more parental emotional dysregulation is related to more reactivity and less regulation in the child. Additionally, results indicated that parental predictability's impact on child regulation is moderated by parental emotional regulation.