

## **Impact of Postpartum Factors and Continued Stressors on Toddler Behavioral Inhibition**

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The postpartum period is often characterized by increased stressors for a mother. Previous research has shown how maternal factors may impact a child's attachment and behavioral development. This study investigates how maternal factors (parenting stress, sleep quality, and social support) at 6 months and 30 months postpartum influence a child's total, social, and separation behavioral inhibition at 30 months using multiple linear regressions. The research explores whether 6M or 30M are sensitive periods of development and how these maternal factors over time may influence a child's behavioral inhibition. We did not find a sensitive period for maternal sleep quality at 6M, however, we found sensitive periods for parenting stress and social support at 6M and toddler behavioral inhibition – separation. The results also indicated that poor maternal sleep at 6 months and 30 months is associated with lower levels of infant social behavioral inhibition compared to mothers with good sleep at both 6 months and 30 months. Additionally, high parenting stress at 6 months and 30 months was associated with high levels of behavioral inhibition – separation, and poor maternal family support at both periods or poor support only at 6M was associated with low levels of behavioral inhibitions—social in toddlers. These findings indicate the importance of studying behavioral inhibition on a spectrum since both low and high levels can be associated with adverse outcomes. Further research is needed to understand why we found more associations with maternal factors and behavioral inhibition social and separation rather than total behavioral inhibition.