



Emotional and behavioural problems in elementary school students

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DESCRIPTION

Growing up with less educated parents may impede children's development of behavioural, emotional, and peer relationships, as well as their academic performance. Economic co-operation and development organization Furthermore, children of less educated parents are more likely to attend schools with children of similar parental education levels. Attending schools with a higher proportion of children from lower parental education backgrounds (i.e., lower parental education schools) may also impede children's development, either independently or in conjunction with household education levels. In light of such obvious disparities, it is proposed that enrolling children of lower-educated parents in schools attended by a majority of children from higher parental education backgrounds (i.e., higher parental education schools) could mitigate the disadvantage of growing up with less-educated parents. There is some empirical evidence to back this up despite this, little is known about the associations of school-level parental education with children's behavioural, emotional, and peer relationship problem development. Furthermore, the potential impact of enrolling children of less educated parents in higher parental education schools is largely untested. As a result, this study investigated whether growing up with less educated parents and attending schools with lower parental education was associated with children's initial level and development of problems in the behavioural, emotional, and peer relationship domains. Furthermore, we looked into whether the relationship between lower individual-level parental education and children's development in these three domains was affected by school-level parental education in first grade and over time from first to sixth grade.

Problems in the behavioural domain (e.g., conduct problems, oppositional defiant problems, aggression, attention-deficit and hyperactivity problems), emotional

domain (e.g., anxiety and depression symptoms), and peer relationship domain (e.g., being disliked or bullied by peers) all impede children's healthy development. Stable-high or increasing levels of problems within these domains may contribute to the development of mental health problems independently or in concert. This, in turn may have immediate and long-term consequences such as lower educational attainment, delinquency, substance abuse, and unemployment. Theories such as the social causation hypothesis may explain how early adverse environments influence children's maladaptive development. According to the social causation hypothesis, mental health problems arise as a result of environmental adversity, disadvantage, and stress associated with socioeconomic deprivation, such as growing up with less educated parents. Indeed, previous research has provided empirical evidence that supports this hypothesis. Despite this, little is known about the links between school-level parental education and the development of behavioural, emotional, and peer relationship problems in children. Furthermore, the potential impact of enrolling children of less educated parents in schools with higher parental education is largely unknown. As a result, this study sought to determine whether growing up with less educated parents and attending schools with lower parental education was linked to children's initial level and development of problems in the behavioural, emotional, and peer relationship domains. Furthermore, we investigated whether school-level parental education affected the relationship between lower individual level parental education and children's development in these three domains in first grade and over time from first to sixth grade.

Several factors have been proposed to explain why growing up with less educated parents is linked to poorer child development outcomes. Lower educated parents, for example, may be less informed about effective

parenting strategies, less able to assist their children with schoolwork, have fewer educational materials and resources at home, and spend less time on activities that align with their children's developmental stages than higher-educated parents. Furthermore, lower-educated parents are more likely than higher-educated parents to have mental health problems, such as higher levels of depression symptoms. All of these factors, together with lower parental education levels, may be linked to children's maladaptive development. Previous empirical studies that looked at the links between growing up with less educated parents and children's behavioural,

emotional, and peer relationship issues focused solely on the individual household level. These empirical studies were also cross-sectional in nature, with two exceptions. According to these studies, children of less educated parents had

- Lower levels of psychological well-being
- Higher levels of behavioral, emotional and psychosocial problems
- More peer relationship difficulties than children of higher-educated parents.