

Preschool Parents' Use of Social Control and the Relationship with Parents' Regulatory Efficacy

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Introduction

- Preschool physical activity (PA) has been related to the influences that parents provide (Loprinzi & Trost, 2010)
 - Social control is a regulatory influence that parents use to prompt or persuade their child to perform PA (Wilson & Spink, 2011)
- Parents' efficacy to manage their child's behavior has been associated with physical activity (Smith et al., 2010) and sedentary behaviors (Wilson & Spink, 2012)
 - Since social influences such as social control have been associated with children's behavior (Wilson & Spink, 2011), one wonders if the influences parents provide would also be associated with the parents efficacy to promote physical activity

Purpose

This study explored whether parent self-efficacy was associated with the use of social control in preschool age children.

Methods

Participants:

- Recruited 23 preschool families to participate (parent and child)
 - 14 boys and 9 girls
 - 20 mothers and 3 fathers
- The ages of preschool children ranged from 2-6 years old (M=3.9 years, SD=1.3 years)

Procedures:

- Parents completed a questionnaire in person

Measures:

Self-efficacy (SE; Bloomquist, 2010)

- 0% (*not at all*) to 100% (*completely confident*)
- Scheduling Self-efficacy (5 items)
 - "In order to have my child participate in PA, I am confident that I can schedule my family's other commitments (e.g., holidays)"
- Barriers self-efficacy (4 items)
 - "I can have my child be physically active even if I am sick"

Social control (SC; Wilson & Spink, 2011)

- Reported use during last week
- 0 (*not at all*) to 7 (*daily*)
 - Positive SC (4 items) – "encourage them"
 - Collaborative SC (3 items) – "offer to be active with them"
 - Negative SC (2 items) – "nag"

Analysis

- Separate multiple regression was performed for each type of SC:
 - DV: Each type of social control
 - IV: Barriers SE and Scheduling SE

Results

Positive SC

Predictors	R ²	β	F
Barriers SE	21%	.44**	2.6*
Scheduling SE		-.22	

Collaborative SC

Predictors	R ²	β	F
Barriers SE	44%	.66**	7.99**
Scheduling SE		.04	

Negative SC

Predictors	R ²	β	F
Barriers SE	11%	-	1.19
Scheduling SE		-	

*p-value ≤ 0.1; **p-value ≤ 0.05



Discussion

- For collaborative and positive SC, parents who were more confident in overcoming barriers reported using more influences
 - Supports concept that self-efficacy influences behavior (Bandura, 1997)
 - More confident parents use more 'effective' types of SC (Wilson & Spink, 2010)
 - In line with previous research showing that self-efficacy is associated with child's behavior (Smith et al., 2010, Wilson & Spink, 2012)
- Parent self-efficacy was not related to use of negative social control
 - Possibly due to lower reliability (Cronbach alpha =.50)
 - Parents appear to report extremely low levels of nagging in this age group
- Scheduling self-efficacy did not emerge
 - Most parents were confidence (M=91.6%)
 - Lack of variability in the scale?

Strengths

- Explored both self efficacy in terms of barriers and parent scheduling with child
 - Used measures developed for parents of preschool-age children

Limitations

- Small sample size (N=23) requires cautious interpretation
- Mostly mothers participated limits ability to generalize to fathers (20 mothers; 3 fathers)

Future Directions

- Examine the conceptualization of negative social control in this age group
- Examine whether parents' self-efficacy relate to physical activity behavior
 - Consider social influences as a possible mediator



	Mean (SD)	Range	Cronbach Alpha
Barriers SE	75.5 (8.8)	15-100	.85
Scheduling SE	91.6 (19.4)	70-100	.74
Positive SC	4.9 (2.0)	0-7	.90
Collaborative SC	4.7 (1.7)	0-7	.88
Negative SC	1.8 (1.9)	0-5.5	.50

