



Risk and Protective Factors and Child Outcomes

Risk Factors	Negative Child Outcomes
Health and Growth	
Fast food	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased risk of childhood obesity • Increased preference for fat, sugar, and salt • Poorer nutrition
Fruit juice (more than recommended daily serving)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased risk of diarrhea, bloating, and stomach pain • Increased risk of obesity • Increased risk of tooth decay (cavities)
Sweetened beverages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased risk of tooth decay (cavities) • Increased risk of obesity
Poor nutrition (before and after birth)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor motor coordination • Hyperactivity • Impulsivity • Language impairment • Learning difficulties • Health problems in adulthood
Exposure to toxins such as lead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor motor coordination • Hyperactivity • Impulsivity • Language impairment • Learning difficulties
Poverty in early childhood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less access to health care • Increased rates of asthma • Increased rates of low birth weight babies • Lower IQ scores
Lack of parental supervision and monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased risk of injury
School Readiness	
Poverty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lower reading and mathematics skills • Fewer pro-social behaviors • More behavior problems • Less ready to learn in kindergarten
Maternal depression	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased risk for social-emotional problems
Low parent education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased risk for social-emotional problems • Lower cognitive skills
Lack of learning opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor motor coordination • Hyperactivity • Impulsivity • Language impairment • Learning difficulties

Risk and Protective Factors and Child Outcomes (cont.)

Risk Factors	Negative Child Outcomes
Guidance and Discipline	
Harsh discipline (shouting, holding grudges, excessive criticism, anger, physical punishment, spanking, negative talk about the child)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aggression • Impulsivity • Antisocial behavior • Anxiety • Withdrawal • Depression
Lack of limit setting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aggression • Impulsivity
Home Environment	
Frequent television viewing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Irregular sleep patterns • Childhood obesity • Decreased academic achievement • Aggression • Decreased attention span • Increased risky behaviors as a teen (sex, drugs, alcohol, or tobacco use)
Supervision and Safety	
Violence on TV	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased aggression and bullying • Numbness to real violence • Reduced sense of security
Lack of bath time supervision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Half of all drowning of children under 5 years occur in the bathtub • Hot water is a primary source of burn injury
Exposure to household dangers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accidental injuries are a leading cause of hospitalization and death for children • Increased risk for low-income children
Family, Friends, and Community	
Neighborhood poverty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decreased development
Parent in prison	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic and residential instability • Increased risk of poverty
Minority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less access to care • Increased risk of health problems
Parenting Styles	
Lack of responsiveness, over-controlling, insensitivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aggression • Oppositional • Less motivation • Lack of interest
Strict parenting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Passiveness
Harsh discipline (shouting, holding grudges, excessive criticism, anger, physical punishment, spanking, negative talk about the child)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aggression and impulsivity • Antisocial behavior • Anxiety and withdrawal • Increased child neglect

Risk and Protective Factors and Child Outcomes (cont.)

Risk Factors	Negative Child Outcomes
Parenting Styles (continued)	
Lack of limit setting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aggression • Impulsivity • Low self-reliance • Low motivation
Protection from Violence	
Parental aggression	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aggression
Domestic violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grief, shame, guilt, embarrassment • Fear, anger, depression • Acting out, attention seeking • Withdrawal • Bedwetting • Nightmares • Bullying or being bullied • Stomachaches, headaches • Isolation • Lack of confidence in adults' ability to protect them; loss of sense of security • Problems in all developmental areas • Interference in brain growth and development causing lasting problems in learning, behavior, and physical and mental health
Sexual abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fearful, anxious • Disturbed sleep and eating patterns • Hypervigilant • Depressed, withdrawn, sad, aggressive • Cruel to animals • Sexually aggressive toward younger children • Sexually explicit drawings • High rates of criminal behavior and drug abuse in adolescence
Maltreatment and neglect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor motor skills and coordination • Hyperactivity • Impulsivity • Language impairment • Learning difficulties • Chronic health problems • Social and emotional problems • Relational and psychological difficulties
Marital conflict	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Problems with emotion regulation and aggression • Decreased social competence • Decreased school engagement • Increased depression • Less parent-child communication

Risk and Protective Factors and Child Outcomes (cont.)

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Parent Support	
Lack of child support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased risk of poverty • Frequent moves • Increased risk of homelessness
Single parent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased anxiety • Decreased academic achievement • Increased risk of poverty • Increased risk of harsh punishment • Poor cognitive, social-emotional, and mental health outcomes • Increased anxiety, depression, unemployment, suicide, and criminal behavior in young adulthood
Poverty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biggest, single predictor of reduced cognitive and social-emotional development • Strongest predictor of child abuse and neglect
Family Relationships	
Divorce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skill regression • Guilt • Problems with acting out and with emotion regulation (especially for boys) • Decreased academic achievement • Disrupted attachment
Parent in prison	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poverty • Residential instability • Increased risk of behavior problems
Single parent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater likelihood of poverty • Increased anxiety • Less likelihood of college degree • Greater likelihood of welfare dependence • Greater likelihood of arrest or conviction for violent and property offenses
Marital conflict	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Problems with emotion regulation • Anxiety • Aggression • Poor peer relations • Less secure attachment • Stress responses (fear, hypervigilance, distress) • Physical responses (headache, stomachache, blood pressure changes)
Father absence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poverty more likely • Problems with making friends • Behavior and adjustment problems more likely • Decreased school achievement

Risk and Protective Factors and Child Outcomes (cont.)

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Family Relationships (continued)	
Teen parent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low birth weight • Lower cognitive and social-emotional skills • Delays in all areas • Increased risk for abuse, neglect, foster care placement, academic failure
Protection from Drug and Alcohol Abuse	
Parental substance abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prenatal effects • Health and safety problems • Poor developmental outcomes in all areas • Risk of child abuse and neglect • Risk of substance abuse as a teen
Mental Health	
Mother's depression	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Problems with social skills and friendships • Increased fear, less exploratory play • Less use of car safety seats, outlet covers, smoke alarms • Increased risk of infant hospitalization • Increased risk of corporal punishment
Father's depression	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased behavior or conduct problems (especially boys) • Increased depression and other emotional problems • Increased academic problems
Parental mental illness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased risk of child abuse and neglect • Problems with emotion regulation • Increased likelihood of exposure to household dangers; less likely to be in proper car seats • Decreased self-esteem; fewer social skills • Increased aggression • More likely to develop psychological problems
Parental stress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delayed social skills • Increased internalizing problems • Behavior problems
Complex trauma	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Altered brain development • Poor developmental outcomes • School failure • Juvenile delinquency • Negatively impacts brain development, cognitive functioning, physical regulation, and ability to form successful relationships

Risk and Protective Factors and Child Outcomes (cont.)

Protective Factors	Positive Child Outcomes
Health and Growth	
Variety of healthy foods daily	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proper nutrition for growth and health • Good food habits • Less childhood obesity • Less picky eating
Medical home and well-child visits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall wellness • Healthy growth and development • Early detection of health problems • Fewer complications for children with special health care needs • Improved parenting practices • Fewer emergency room visits
Dental care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fewer sick days • Reduced cavities
Immunization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fewer childhood diseases and complications from disease
Physical activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotes overall health • Strong bones and muscles • Reduces stress and depression • Enhances learning capacity and mental health
School Readiness	
Knowledge of child development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased development in all areas
Talking frequently to child	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased language skills and vocabulary • Better behaviors
Reading to child	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enjoyment of books • Increased reading skills • Increased language, larger vocabulary • More school success • Better parent-child interaction
Nurturing parenting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advanced in all aspects of development • Increased attention • Secure parent-child relationship • Less stress and better thinking skills • Positive relationships with others • Less anxiety • Fewer acting out behaviors
Time, space, and materials for play	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased development in all areas • Increased school readiness skills • Better problem-solving skills • Motivation to learn
Playing with child	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased development in all areas • Increased school readiness skills • Better problem-solving skills • Motivation to learn

Risk and Protective Factors and Child Outcomes (cont.)

Protective Factors	Positive Child Outcomes
School Readiness (continued)	
Father engagement in play and reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better self-regulation • Better thinking, language, and math skills
Guidance and Discipline	
Consistent, warm guidance and discipline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better behavior • Positive self-esteem • Learns to internalize rules and determine right from wrong • Learns family values and family routines • Less negative attention seeking • Less adult intervention needed in school age
Home Environment	
Consistent family routines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased organization skills • Better behavior • Greater sense of security • Healthy habits • Better ability to cope with stress
Family mealtime	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less obesity • Increased language skills • Enhanced self-esteem
Quality co-parenting (in same or separate households)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased attachment and sense of security • Positive sense of self
Supervision and Safety	
Use of car safety seats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prevents death and decreases injury in the event of an accident • Starting healthy habits early increases the likelihood of them continuing
Close supervision (monitoring)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safer from injury
Family, Friends, and Community	
Both parents involved with child	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher education
Parent involvement with child's school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased motivation to learn • Increased attention • Increased task persistence • Understands more words • Fewer behavior problems in the classroom
Parenting Styles	
Effective parenting practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fewer behavior problems • More effective responses from parent • Increased positive interactions with parents • Introduced to more new experiences
Skin-to-skin contact for preemies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better self-regulation • Smoother sleep-wake cycles • More infant exploratory play

Risk and Protective Factors and Child Outcomes (cont.)

Protective Factors	Positive Child Outcomes
Parenting Styles (continued)	
Warm, sensitive, and responsive parenting (mothers and fathers)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved social-emotional, cognitive, and language development • Improved attention • Secure parent-child relationship • Less stress and better thinking skills • Positive relationships with others • Less anxiety • Fewer acting out behaviors • Enhanced cognitive, language, and social-emotional development
Parent Support	
Positive social supports for parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More frequent parent-child interactions • Less maternal anxiety • Reduced child abuse and neglect • Reduced harsh parenting • Reduced maternal depression
Child support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decreased likelihood of poverty • Increased school performance • Fewer behavior problems
Family Relationships	
Father involvement in school and daily care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved cognitive, language and social-emotional skills • Higher education • Better jobs
Attachment to a caring adult	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sense of security • Better with peer relations • Higher self-esteem • Less clinging, aggression, and tantrums • Longer attention span in play • Better problem solving • More likely to ask for help when needed