



Notes for further reading

As editorial policy, *California Agriculture* devotes its limited space to developing a meaningful interpretation of technical research; it does not print extensive literature citations. However, because the accompanying article reviews the work of 42 developmental psychologists and sociologists, and because readers may wish to pursue avenues of this research, we include the following abbreviated list of references which corresponds to major findings cited in the text. Each numbered item lists the author(s), publication year(s) and journal or book to which the matching note in the text refers. For a complete reference list, contact Brenda Bryant at (916) 752-2242.

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exist in the workplace and at school, the involvement of both parents in the parenting arena at home, and the child's experience during after-school hours. A multicontextual analysis is useful, one that recognizes the impact of features of the immediate family environment as well as that of the wider physical and social context in which the child and parent function, including, but not limited to, parents' workplace (sidebar, #2).

An economic issue

Any discussion of maternal employment and its impact on parenting and child development during the school-age years must first recognize that for many, maternal employment is an economic necessity. For these women, maternal employment eliminates or reduces economic distress, a form of family stress that can impact negatively on both parenting and child development. In general, economic distress has been found to lead to parental depression, marital conflict, and disruption in skillful parenting; this disruption in parenting skill has adverse consequences on child development (sidebar, #3). It is not the economic adversity *per se* that has the negative impact, but rather the disruption and conflict that it causes in marital relations and parent-child relations that can negatively affect a child.

Studies of families in lower socioeconomic situations have documented that employed mothers are more likely than their unemployed counterparts to provide structured rules for their children and have consistency between theory and practice (sidebar, #4). If economic distress impacts negatively on parenting, and maternal employment can reduce this distress, maternal employment then can be beneficial to both parenting and child development.

Putting aside the issue of economic distress, discussions are often framed as though there is an absolute "yes" or "no" answer to the question of whether mothers should work for pay when considering the good of their children. Research on family functioning and child development suggests that such polarization of thinking is