

Child Care & Early Education RESEARCH CONNECTIONS

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Non-parental Caregiver Depression A Key Topic Resource List March 2008

Research Connections conducted a comprehensive search of its collection for resources focused on **non-parental caregiver depression**. This Key Topic Resource List includes an overview and listing of selected resources from the literature on depression among non-parental caregivers and emotional supports for them.

While research on this topic is still emerging, resources of various types- including reports and papers, fact sheets and briefs, summaries, and reviews are included. Selection criteria included policy relevance and relatively recent publication (since the year 2000). Based on the search results, resources were grouped into the following categories:

- Depression in non-parental caregivers
- Supporting non-parental caregivers

Within each category, resources are organized according to publisher type and publication date. *Research Connections'* one-sentence descriptions are included for each resource. For complete citations, which include abstracts and full text for some resources, click on the titles.

Overview:

Much research has been devoted to depression among parental caregivers and its effects on children's developmental outcomes. Emerging studies are now exploring depression among non-parental caregivers. Similar to findings that maternal depressive symptoms generally lead to poorer outcomes in children, the research to date shows non-parental caregivers who report higher rates of depression tend to be less sensitive and more withdrawn, and are more likely to display poor quality interactions with children. This may result in less positive developmental outcomes, particularly when there is only one caregiver present. Research to date on non-parental caregivers shows correlations between high depression rates and caregivers with low levels of education and those working in greater isolation.

While further research is needed to understand how such characteristics are linked to caregiver depression and how to improve the quality of interactions between children and their caregiver, the current literature suggests that providing social support services for non-parental caregivers, like those provided for parents through Head Start programs, may be an effective tool to improve the quality of caregiver-child interactions.

Research on depression in non-parental caregivers examines questions including the following:

- What is the extent of depression among non-parental caregivers?
- What characteristics are associated with higher incidences of depression among non-parental caregivers?
- How do rates of caregiver depression vary by type of child care setting? How do work environments contribute to rates of caregiver depression?
- What is the relationship between depression of non-parental caregivers and children's competence in literacy, social, and cognitive areas?
- What early childhood program supports are available for non-parental depressed caregivers?

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Depression in non-parental caregivers

Journals

- Gerber, Emily, Whitebook, Marcy, Weinstein, Rhona S. (2007). [At the heart of child care: Predictors of teacher sensitivity in center-based child care](#). *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 22(3), 327-346
An examination of the correlation between characteristics of early childhood teachers and settings and teacher sensitivity in 43 child care centers in Northern California.
- Pianta, Robert C., Howes, Carollee, Burchinal, Margaret, Bryant, Donna M., Clifford, Richard M., Early, Diane M., Barbarin, Oscar (2005). [Features of pre-kindergarten programs, classrooms, and teachers: Do they predict observed classroom quality and child-teacher interaction?](#) *Applied Developmental Science*, 9(3), 144-159.
An observational study of the extent to which features of programs, classrooms, and teachers contribute to quality and teacher-child interactions in a sample of 238 classrooms in 6 state-funded pre-kindergarten programs.
- Hamre, Bridget, Pianta, Robert C. (2004). [Self-reported depression in nonfamilial caregivers: Prevalence and associations with caregiver behavior in child-care settings](#). *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 19(2), 297-318.
A study of the prevalence of depression among nonfamilial child care providers and the associations between depression rates and the quality of provider-child interactions, based on data from the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) Study of Early Child Care (SECC).
- Clarke-Stewart, K. Alison, Vandell, Deborah L., Burchinal, Margaret, O'Brien, Marion, McCartney, Kathleen. (2002). [Do regulable features of child-care homes affect children's development?](#) *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 17(1), 52-86.
An analysis of the links between regulable and nonregulable features of family child care homes and infants' and toddlers' cognitive development using data from the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development Study of Early Child Care.
- NICHD Early Care Research Network. (2002). [Nonmaternal care and family factors in early development: An overview of the NICHD Study of Early Child Care](#). *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*, 22(5), 457-492.
An examination of connections among child care experiences, family characteristics, and early childhood developmental outcomes based on a study of 1100 children followed from birth to age 7.
- Weaver, Ruth Harding. (2002). [Predictors of quality and commitment in family child care: Provider education, personal resources, and support](#). *Early Education and Development*, 13(3), 265-282.
An article relating characteristics of family child care providers to child care quality and commitment.

- Musil, Carol M. (2000). [Health of grandmothers as caregivers: A ten month follow-up](#) *Journal of Women and Aging*, 12(1-2), 129-145
An investigation of self-reported health, depression, anxiety, stress, coping, and support in a sample of grandmothers living with their grandchildren and comparing these reports with the self-reported health assessments of grandmothers acting as either primary or part-time care givers for their grandchildren

Universities and Research Organizations

- Morrissey, Taryn. (2007). [Family child care in the United States](#). New York: Child Care & Early Education Research Connections.
A review of research studies examining regulated family child care in the United States, including survey, observation, demonstration, and evaluation research.
- Fish, Angela M. (2005). [Mental health status of preschool teachers and childcare providers](#). Unpublished master's thesis, Wayne State University, Detroit, MI.
An examination of depressive symptoms among preschool teachers and child care providers, comparing the rate of symptoms among this group to the rate of symptoms among the general public.
- Whitebook, Marcy, Phillips, Deborah A., Bellm, Dan, Crowell, Nancy, Almaraz, Mirella, Jo, Joon Yong. (2004). [Two years in early care and education: A community portrait of quality and workforce stability: Alameda County, California](#). Berkeley: University of California, Berkeley, Center for the Study of Child Care Employment.
A report profiling child care quality and the center-based, licensed family, and license-exempt child care workforce in Alameda County, California, from 2001 to 2003.
- Harris, Lori. (2002). [Grandparent involvement in child care: Relations between caregiving levels, grandparent role meaning, role satisfaction, and psychological well-being](#). Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale.
An analysis of the differences between grandparents providing various levels of child care assistance for grandchildren on aspects of role meaning, role satisfaction, psychological well-being, and psychological development, based on questionnaires distributed to a sample of 167 grandparents

Other

- Gilliam, Walter S. (2008). [Implementing policies to reduce the likelihood of preschool expulsion \(FCD Policy Brief Advancing PK-3 No. 7\)](#). New York: Foundation for Child Development
An overview of expulsion rates in prekindergarten and structural and process program variables associated with expulsion, with recommendations for reducing expulsion rates among children with challenging classroom behaviors

Supporting non-parental caregivers*

Journals

- Buell, Martha J., Pfister, Ilka, Gamel-McCormick, Michael (2002). [Caring for the caregiver: Early Head Start/family child care partnerships](#). *Infant Mental Health Journal*, 23(1-2), 213-230.
An exploration of the perceived benefits of partnering with the Northern Delaware Early Head Start program for four family child care providers

University and Research Organizations

- Knitzer, Jane, Theberge, Suzanne, and Johnson, Kay (2008). [Reducing maternal depression and its impact on young children: Toward a responsive early childhood policy framework](#). (Project THRIVE Issue Brief No. 2). New York: Columbia University, National Center for Children in Poverty
Overviews of policy, programs, and research addressing the effects of maternal depression on child development and school readiness, particularly in low-income populations

- **Johnson, Kay & Knitzer, Jane. (2005).** [Spending smarter: A funding guide for policymakers and advocates to promote social and emotional health and school readiness.](#) New York: Columbia University, National Center for Children in Poverty.
A discussion of fiscal strategies to promote the emotional health of families and young children, highlighting opportunities for policymakers and describing effective social programs.
- **Knitzer, Jane, Lefkowitz, Jill (2005).** [Resources to promote social and emotional health and school readiness in young children and families: A community guide](#) New York: Columbia University, National Center for Children in Poverty
A description of interventions that families and early care providers can use to promote healthy development, encourage the ability to form and grow accustomed to supportive relationships and reduce challenging behaviors in infants, toddlers, and preschoolers, with discussion of how these strategies can be used most effectively
- **Zeanah, Paula D., Stafford, Brian S., Nagle, Geoffrey A., Rice, Thomas. (2005).** [Addressing social-emotional development and infant mental health in early childhood systems.](#) (Building State Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Series No. 12). University of California, Los Angeles, National Center for Infant and Early Childhood Health Policy.
A policy report addressing several issues associated with infant mental health (IMH), including organization; delivery of services; and funding and training opportunities
- **Borg, Amy; & Irwin, Martha. (2002).** [Strategies to support the emotional wellness of children, families, and staff: Findings from a Head Start mental health task force.](#) Newton, MA: Education Development Center.
A Head Start mental health task offers findings on creative and effective strategies and program elements that have been used to support the emotional wellness of children, families, and teachers in a New England Head Start program, including screening tools, curricula, positive working environments, and additional supports and community resources.

*Strategies that support non-parental depressed caregivers draw from and often are provided in conjunction with parental supports. For more information and resources on mental health supports and early education see- [Linking mental health and child care and early education services: A Key Topic Resource List.](#)

To suggest additions to this Key Topic Resource List, please email us at contact@researchconnections.org.

To view and sort the full search results from which these resources were selected, including any resources added to the collection since selection of the Resource List, use the Create Updated Search Results function. The full results came from the searches—caregiver depress* *all of the words*, teacher depression *exact phrase*, or title: caregiver mental health *exact phrase*.