

Maternal Support Systems and Maternal Cognition: Determinants of Cognitive Development of Young Children

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ABSTRACT The aim of the present study was to examine the impact of maternal support networks and maternal cognition on young children's cognitive development. Preschool children (n = 30) and their mothers constituted the sample. The instruments used were self-structured social network list, adapted Analogous Instrument (Ladd and Price 1986) and McCarthy Scale of Children's Abilities. The results indicated that maternal support systems and maternal cognition played positive role in developing cognitive abilities in children. Mothers with high cognition had children with average and above average cognitive abilities. It was also observed that majority of mothers with wide support systems had high cognition and mothers with small support systems had poor cognition. Maternal support system may indirectly influence children's cognitive abilities. Thus, results reveal that these systems may influence maternal cognition which in turn may help to improve cognitive abilities of children. Mothers get new information and knowledge about child rearing practices from neighbourhood, grandparents and early childhood teachers. Among all maternal support systems like neighbours, grandparents, hired aide and preschools, the most influential is preschool. This study has implication for early childhood teachers and field functionaries.