

Whose Support Matters in Military Families? Parental Social Support and Parenting

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BACKGROUND

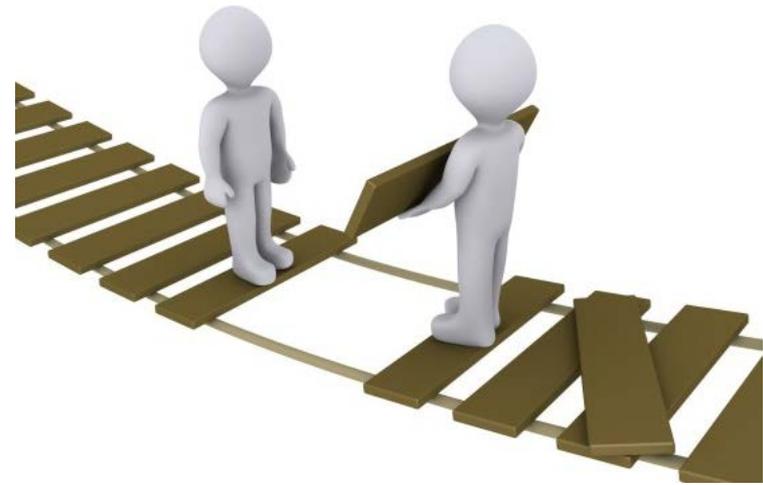


- Social support has a beneficial effect on psychological and physical health (Belsky, 1984; Cobb, 1976; House, Landis, & Umberson, 1988).
- Parental social support can buffer against negative effects of stressful life situations and contribute to effective parenting (Cohen & Wills, 1985; DeGarmo & Forgatch, 2012).

GAPS IN THE LITERATURE



- Little is known about **parent** social support, specifically, in relation to parenting.
- Almost **nothing is known** about parent social support among **military-connected families**.
- Few studies look at both **mothers and fathers**.



The Determinants of Parenting by Jay Belsky (1984)

- 3 sources of support and stress : the marital relationship, employment and social support.

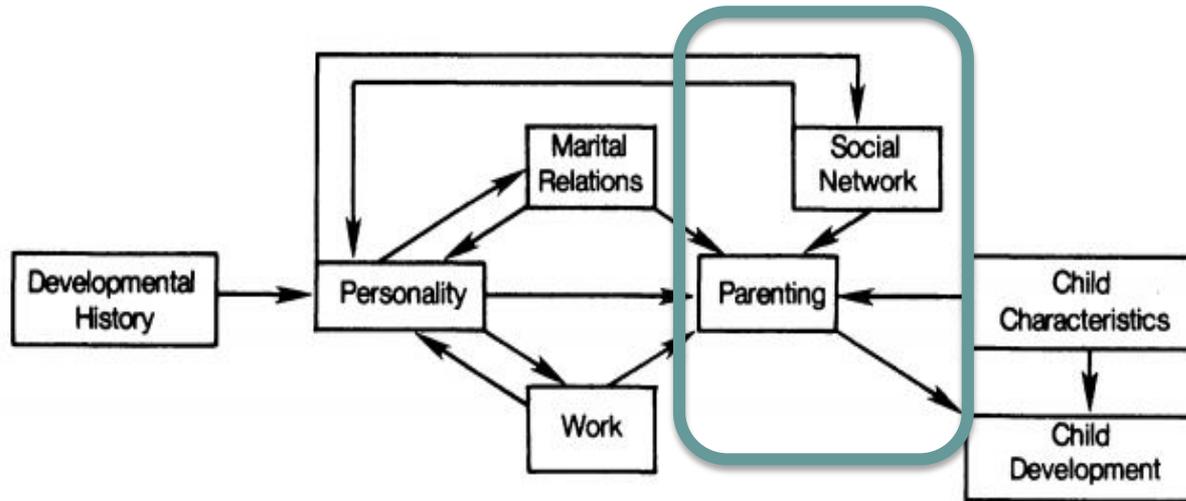
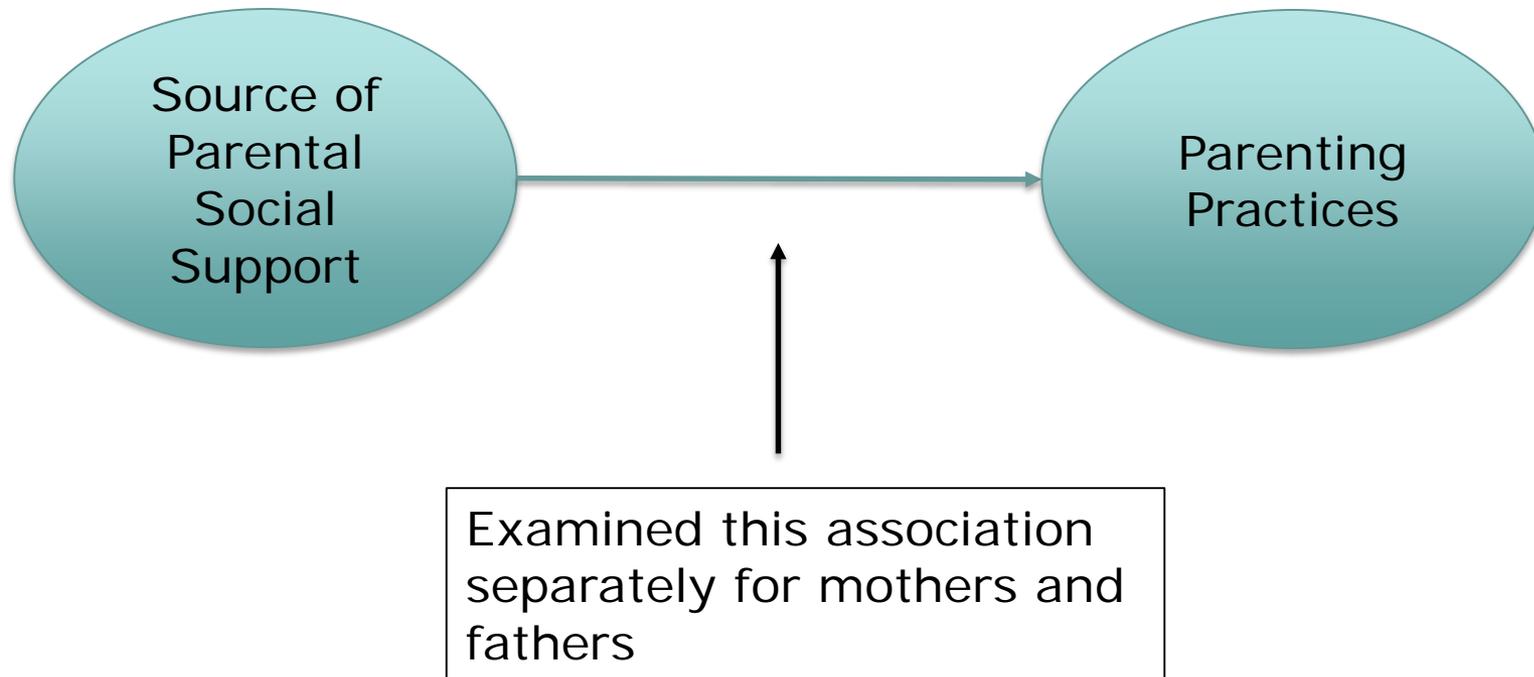


FIG. 1.—A process model of the determinants of parenting

- **Research Question:**
How does the association between parental social support and parenting practices differ for mothers & fathers in post-deployed National Guard and Reserve families?



CURRENT STUDY



ADAPT (AFTER DEPLOYMENT: ADAPTIVE PARENTING TOOLS)



ADAPT

After Deployment: Adaptive Parenting Tools

- PMTO program modified to meet military families' needs
- Curriculum:
 - Help parents get back on the same page after deployment
 - Develop effective communication strategies with children
 - Acknowledge how combat stress might influence parenting and family life

SAMPLE



- Baseline data only
- $N = 440$ parents
 - 220 non-deployed mothers
 - 220 previously deployed fathers
- 92% White/Caucasian
- Average household income = \$70,000-\$79,999



Child
between 5-
12 years



One parent
deployed
since 2001

MEASURES



Parenting Support Index (PSI; DeGarmo)

Source of Support	Domain
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Current partner• Relatives• Friends• Neighbors• Co-workers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Emergency child care• Non-emergency child care• Practical parenting assistance• Financial assistance

- Alabama Parenting Questionnaire (APQ-9; Elgar, Waschbusch, Dadds, & Sigvaldason, 2007)
- 3 Domains of parenting:
 - **Positive parenting** – “You compliment your child after he/she has done something well.”
 - **Inconsistent discipline** – “Your child talks you out of being punished after he/she has done something wrong.”
 - **Poor supervision** – “Your child is out with friends you don’t know.”

RESULTS: POSITIVE PARENTING



	Fathers		Mothers	
	Step 1 β	Step 2 β	Step 1 β	Step 2 β
	Positive Parenting			
Annual household income	.04	.01	-.07	-.06
Number children in home	-.10	-.09	-.13*	-.12 ⁺
Current partner support		.08		.11
Relatives support		-.04		.13 ⁺
Friends support		.22*		-.12
Neighbors support		.12		-.02
Coworkers support		.08*		.01
Adjusted R ²	.01	.06	.01	.03
F	1.18	2.99**	2.19	2.72 ⁺

RESULTS: POSITIVE PARENTING



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RESULTS: POSITIVE PARENTING



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Neighbors support		.12		-.02
Coworkers support		.08*		.01
Adjusted R ²	.01	.06	.01	.03
F	1.18	2.99**	2.19	2.72 ⁺

RESULTS: INCONSISTENT DISCIPLINE



	Fathers		Mothers	
	Step 1 β	Step 2 β	Step 1 β	Step 2 β
	Inconsistent Discipline			
Annual household income	.08	.08	-.03	-.01
Number children in home	-.01	-.01	.07	.06
Current partner support		.01		.09
Relatives support		.07		.03
Friends support		-.09		.01
Neighbors support		.04		-.11
Coworkers support		.02		-.02
Adjusted R ²	-.01	-.02	-.01	-.01
F	0.62	0.40	.66	.83

RESULTS: POOR SUPERVISION



	Fathers		Mothers	
	Step 1 β	Step 2 β	Step 1 β	Step 2 β
	Poor Supervision			
Annual household income	-.04	-.04	.01	-.01
Number children in home	-.03	-.03	.05	.06
Current partner support		.02		.07
Relatives support		.06		-.08
Friends support		-.16 ⁺		-.05
Neighbors support		.07		.04
Coworkers support		.06		.09
Adjusted R ²	-.01	-.01	.01	.02
F	.22	.61	.28	.52

RESULTS: POOR SUPERVISION



	Fathers		Mothers	
	Step 1 β	Step 2 β	Step 1 β	Step 2 β
	Poor Supervision			
Annual household income	-.04	-.04	.01	-.01
Number children in home	-.03	-.03	.05	.06
Current partner support		.02		.07
Relatives support		.06		-.08
Friends support		-.16 ⁺		-.05
Neighbors support		.07		.04
Coworkers support		.06		.09
Adjusted R ²	-.01	-.01	.01	.02
F	.22	.61	.28	.52

SO WHAT?



- Mothers and fathers may turn to different people within their social network for parental social support.
- Importance of families' background and previous experience

IMPLICATIONS



- Policy → Could encourage the development of and fathers' participation in peer-to-peer support programs in the military and community.
- Programming → Continue including and encouraging other family members (grandparents, siblings, etc.) to be involved, particularly for mothers.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS



- Cross-sectional
- Parents with specific military experience (NG/R)
- Clusters, classes, or profiles of social support
- Observed parenting measures

THANK YOU



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