### Maternal Employment and the Mother-Child Relationship

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#### Introduction
- It has been suggested that a mother's employment status affects the quality of emotional support she gives her children as well as the quantity of time she spends with them, factors which play a large role in children's development. (Sphancer, Melick, Sore, & Spivey, 2005).
- Developmental theories and parenting research suggest a relationship exists between the level of emotional support provided in the home, and child behavior problems (McCarty, Zimmerman, Diguiuseppe, & Christophakis, 2005).
- Galinsky (1999) suggested a possible gender difference in outcomes of maternal employment, suggesting daughters of employed mothers would report higher levels of feeling loved, supported, and understood by mothers compared to daughters of stay-at-home mothers, while boys would show no difference.
- The purpose of this study was to examine whether children of stay-at-home mothers showed differences in reported levels of maternal warmth, maternal trust and maternal conflict, as well as the quantity of time she spends with children, and high rates of twins in samples which could change maternal responsibilities, stress levels and maternal conflict, than those of employed mothers.

#### Participants
- Participants were 252 dyads aged 8-12 (M = 9.6, SD = 1.4) who took part in the Twins, Adoptees, Peers and Siblings (TAPS) study (McGuire et al., 2010).
- The families were predominantly middle class, with 63% of European ancestry.
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#### Measures
- The children completed multiple questionnaires as part of a three-hour home interview about their family relationships:
  - **Maternal Warmth**: children completed a measure of perceived maternal warmth (Schaefer, 1965); α = .86
  - **Maternal Conflict**: children completed a measure of perceived maternal conflict (Crouter, Bumpus, Davis, & McIale, 2005); α = .87
  - **Maternal Trust**: children completed a measure of perceived maternal trust (Crouter, Bumpus, Davis, & McIale, 2005); α = .86
- Each mother reported her occupation
  - Stay-at-Home mothers, retired mothers, or unemployed mothers were listed as “Homemakers” (91).
  - Mothers with part-time or full-time careers were listed as “Employed” (174).

#### Results
- Independent t-tests were used to compare mean scores of employed mothers to stay-at-home mothers for maternal warmth, F(1, 212) = 6.646, ns, maternal conflict, F(1, 252) = .660, ns, and maternal trust F(1, 213) = .645, ns.
- There were no significant statistical differences between the groups in relationship quality.
- ANOVAs showed that maternal employment status and gender did not have a significant interaction with maternal warmth F(1, 250) = 1.372, ns, maternal conflict F(1, 250) = 2.813, ns, or maternal trust F(1, 250) = .742, ns, although the slight differences were favorable for daughters of stay-at-home mothers, and unfavorable for sons of stay-at-home mothers.

#### Mother-Child Relationship

#### References