

# WHAT'S NEW WITH KIDS?

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## Site of the Month

Child Trends used data from a sample of about 9,000 third graders from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study Kindergarten Class of 1998-99 to investigate background factors that affect mothers' depression and how maternal depression affects their parenting and their children's acting-out behavior in school. Specifically, they examined "the pathways of influence" from the antecedents (e.g., work hours), to depression (e.g., measured using an abbreviated Center for Epidemiological Studies of Depression Scale), to parenting behaviors (e.g., using appropriate discipline), to a child outcome (e.g., acting out in class as reported by a child and the child's teacher).

Statistical analyses revealed that marriage, higher family income, relationship satisfaction, and higher parental education were directly related to less acting-out behavior exhibited by the third graders; whereas, welfare receipt, financial problems, longer work hours, and working during a child's preschool years were related to more acting-out behavior.

Based upon their findings, Child Trends recommends that to enhance child development:

- ◆ parents chose a middle ground, one which avoids very long work hours, but avoids poverty and dependency
- ◆ parents with sufficient income consider allowing one parent to stay at home when their children are very young
- ◆ educational opportunities be available for mothers
- ◆ mothers finish their education before starting childbearing
- ◆ public policy focus on identifying and treating maternal-depression symptoms

The research brief, "Depression Among Moms: Prevalence, Predictors, and Acting Out Among Third Grade Children" by Kristen Anderson Moore et al., is available online at: <http://www.childtrends.org/Files/MomDepressionRB.pdf>.

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