

Neuropsychology Abstracts

Title: DEVELOPMENT IN CHILDREN WITH SPINA BIFIDA: THE IMPACT OF PARENTING AND MOTOR SKILLS

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Background: Children with Spina Bifida (SB) often have difficulties, as well as relative strengths, with the development of cognitive, language, and adaptive behavior skills. It has also been proposed that the degree to which children establish skills in one area of development (e.g., motor) may influence development in other areas (e.g., broader cognitive and language skills). The impact of environmental factors (e.g., socioeconomic status and the quality of parental interaction) is also likely to influence these developmental areas, particularly in terms of enhancing strengths and ameliorating the impacts of weaknesses in cognitive development. This study evaluated the relation of early motor development and cognition, language, and daily living skills. In addition, the relation between early parenting quality and later development in these areas was examined.

Method: The impact of parenting and motor skills on the development of cognitive, language, and daily living skills was examined in 165 children (91 with SB), from 6–36 months of age.

Results: Motor scores significantly influenced cognitive, language, and daily living skills. Higher quality parenting was associated with higher levels of development and faster growth in cognitive and language skills for both groups. However, on daily living skills, an interaction among parenting, motor skills and group revealed that higher quality parenting was associated with higher levels and faster rates of growth only for the typically developing children with better motor skills.

Conclusion: This study adds to the research on early development by considering the impact of parenting style and motor skills on the development of cognitive, language, and daily living skills in children with and without SB. The results show that difficulties are measurable in all these domains and persist across early childhood. Moreover, parenting style was a significant moderator and motor functioning was a significant time-varying covariate in all three domains.