

Effects of Paternal and Maternal Love and Lack of Love on Children's Psychological Adjustment and Maladjustment

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Although, historically, researchers have been primarily focusing on the influence of mother love, largely ignoring the influence of father love, on children's developmental outcomes [1], a growing body of research shows that father's love, affection, and care often have as strong or even stronger effects on children's psycho-social development than do mother's love and affection [2-5].

Results of a recent meta-analytic review have shown that father love has a significantly stronger relation with children's psychological adjustment than mother love cross-culturally [6]. Moreover, in a review of a large number of cross-cultural studies, Rohner and Britner [7] have found that perceived paternal rejection or lack of love tends to have stronger negative implications than perceived maternal rejection for the development of depression, conduct disorder and substance abuse. Research literature further indicates that paternal love affects children's development at all ages from infancy through adulthood [3]. A recent meta-analysis shows that the outcomes of paternal versus maternal love can be different for sons and daughters. For example, remembrance of maternal love in childhood showed significantly stronger relations with adult sons' current psychological adjustment than that of adult daughters. Moreover, remembrances of paternal love in childhood showed significantly stronger relations with adult daughters' psychological adjustment than did daughters' remembrance of maternal love [2].

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