

**The Effects of Parenting on Noncognitive Skills:
Evidence from a Sample of Twins in Germany**

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Abstract

Whilst numerous theories in the social sciences assume that parenting affects child development, there is only little causal evidence that this is actually the case. We use data from the German TwinLife study to estimate the causal effects of parenting styles and parental activities on a variety of children's noncognitive skills. To control for unobserved heterogeneity and reverse causality, we combine twin fixed-effects models with longitudinal information. Moreover, we run separate analyses for MZ and DZ twins to rule out children's genetic variation influencing the effects of parenting. This approach allows us to estimate the causal effects of parenting styles and parental activities on children's noncognitive skills better than most previous studies. Overall, we find little evidence that parenting styles and parental activities affect the development of children's noncognitive skills, challenging optimistic views about the impact of parenting on child development. We conclude that the relationship between parenting and child development is more complex than both theories and empirical research have so far acknowledged.

Keywords

child development, family, inequality, noncognitive skills, parenting, twins