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Socio-emotional development in children of teenage mothers

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Abstract

Research has found that teenage mothers are less likely to develop a positive parent child relationship and to form an emotional bond with the child because they are not prepared to be parent as teenagers. Since there is high rate of teenage pregnancy in South Africa, this would mean that there is a vast amount of teenage mothers in the country. Therefore, it would be expected that, it would be a challenge for these teenage mothers to form an emotional bond with their children. Hence the purpose of the study is to look at the socio-emotional development of children born to teenage mothers in the South African context. This was done by first investigating whether there was a relationship between teenage childbearing and the child's social-emotional development in middle and late childhood and to determine whether the socio-emotional development of children born to teenage mothers differs significantly with the children that are not born to non-teenage mothers. This study adopted a non-experimental Ex-Post-Facto correlational Design. A self-designed biographical information questionnaire was used to measure the demographics. To measure social-emotional development in children, an Emotional Quotient Inventory: Youth Version (EQ-i:YVTM) was used. The preliminary results of the research indicate that the type of mother was a statistically significant predictor of the child's social and emotional development. Furthermore, that the socio-emotional development of children born of teenage mothers was different from the socio-emotional development of children born to non-teenage mothers, as the social and emotional development of children born to teenage mothers was higher than that of children born to non-teenage mothers. The conclusion can be drawn that teenage childbearing does not seem to negatively influence the social and emotional development of children born to teenage mothers.