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# Parents take over less when they think their young child is learning

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## Abstract

Over-engaged parenting is on the rise: Parents in the U.S. are increasingly completing developmentally appropriate tasks for young children, which relates to reduced child persistence. What can help parents to step back? Across two pre-registered studies, we test the novel hypothesis that parents step back when they prioritize their child's learning. In line with this hypothesis, parents of 4-5-year-olds ( $N = 77$ ) reported taking over less on tasks from which they think their child learns more, which was more often the case for academic (versus non-academic) tasks (Study 1). Study 2 found causal evidence for this hypothesis: Emphasizing children's learning in a novel, non-academic context reduced parents' ( $N = 60$ ) taking over actions by half compared to a control condition. This work shows that parents take over less when they think that their young child is learning and opens new avenues for interventions to reduce over-engaged parenting.