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The association between preschool teacher-child relationship and children's kindergarten outcomes

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Abstract

This study examined relations between teacher-child closeness and conflict in preschool and children's behavior problems, social skills, and executive function (EF) in kindergarten, and explored if these relations are moderated by parental education. The study also sought to examine the relation between teacher-child closeness and conflict and the subscales of children's behavior problems and social skills. The sample consisted of 126 preschool children ($M = 56.70$ months, $SD = 3.89$). Regression analyses revealed that teacher-child conflict predicted children's social skills, specifically assertion, engagement, and cooperation. Parental education moderated the association between teacher-child conflict and EF, and also emerged as a marginally significant moderator of teacher-child closeness and behavior problems. The findings thereby indicated differential relations between teacher-child closeness and conflict and children's outcomes. With regard to future research, it may be important to consider other aspects of the teacher-child relationship and classroom environment as well.