

# Verbally aggressive mothers direct their children's behavior

July 9 2008

---

A new study in Human Communication Research reveals that verbally aggressive mothers tend to control their children's choice of activities as well as use physical negative touch, along with directives, when trying to alter their child's actions.

Researchers led by Steven R. Wilson of Purdue University videotaped forty mothers as they completed a ten minute play period with one of their children between the ages of three and eight years. The mothers then completed a series of questionnaires including the Verbal Aggressiveness Scale.

Mothers who scored higher on the self-reported VA Scale engaged in more frequent directing of their child's behavior during the play activities. These mothers were more likely to control activity choices as well as the pace and duration of activities. High VA mothers did so repeatedly and in a manner that tended to enforce an activity choice they had made. Low VA mothers were more likely to follow their child's lead or seek their child's input about choice of activity.

High VA mothers used physical negative touch (PNT) when trying to change their child's actions. Examples of parental PNT by high VA mothers included restraining a child by the shoulder or the wrist to prevent him or her from reaching a toy. No instances of PNT occurred for low VA mothers.

In addition, children with low VA mothers displayed virtually no

resistance to their mother's directives. Children with high trait VA mothers occasionally resisted their mothers' directives, though this resistance tended to be indirect and short-lived.

Source: Wiley

Citation: Verbally aggressive mothers direct their children's behavior (2008, July 9) retrieved 29 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2008-07-aggressive-mothers-children-behavior.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.