

# Divorce and parental rejection influence children's educational attainment

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The educational attainment of Dutch children depends not only on their parents' socioeconomic position, but also on adverse experiences such as parental divorce or maltreatment. The negative effects of these adverse

experiences are the most significant for children of parents with a strong socioeconomic position. This was revealed through research done by Radboud University sociologists that was published in *Research in Social Stratification and Mobility* on 13 April.

One in two Dutch citizens indicates having experienced [adverse experiences](#) in their youth, such as parental divorce or parental rejection. This was found to occur in all layers of society. These adverse experiences influence children's educational attainment children later on.

Additionally, the consequences of these experiences are not limited to financially vulnerable groups. Parental financial resources do not provide a buffer against the consequences of adverse experiences. On the contrary, the effects of adverse experiences are the most significant on the level of education of children in a relatively better situation, as they have more to lose.

## **Cultural buffer vanishes**

Sociologist Carlijn Bussemakers says, "We see that parental rejection and, to a lesser extent, [parental divorce](#) remove the cultural buffer for children of more resourceful parents. These children do not profit as much from cultural activities or being read to, for example. However, this cultural aspect of upbringing is very important for the later level of education of the child."

The question remains what causes this. "Do the parents visit the theater or museum with their children less often because of lack of time? Or does it have less influence because an adverse experience changes the relationship with the child?" Bussemakers asks. Further research is required to find out.

This study shows that educational inequalities form a serious and

complex issue in the Netherlands. It involves more aspects than merely differences in income, as families that seem to be well off may still have vulnerable [children](#).

The research was based on the [Family Survey Dutch Population](#) (link in Dutch). This representative survey asked Dutch citizens to look back on their youth,

**More information:** Youth adversity, parental resources and educational attainment: Contrasting a resilience and a reproduction perspective. *Research in Social Stratification and Mobility*. Open access. 13 April 2020, 100505: [doi.org/10.1016/j.rssm.2020.100505](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.rssm.2020.100505)

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