

Parenting alone isn't to blame for gender inequality

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New research shows parents are largely not to blame for economic inequality between men and women in Aotearoa New Zealand. Other factors in society, outside parents' control, are contributing more to

ongoing harmful economic gender inequality, meaning men have better economic outcomes than women.

Motu Research has just released new research investigating if gender attitudes and inequality in Aotearoa are passed down the generations from parents to children. This research used data from children up to age eight and their parents who are part of the Growing Up in New Zealand long term research project.

"Our research shows parents in Aotearoa generally treat their boy and girl children the same. However, the small differences we did see in parents' treatment of boys and girls could contribute to inequality between genders and children's understanding of [gender stereotypes](#), but they are not the main cause," says Ph.D. candidate Livvy Mitchell, the lead author of the paper.

"Overall, the differences in parenting of younger boys and girls aren't big enough to fully explain the gender inequality in Aotearoa. This indicates other factors in society, outside parents' control, are contributing more to ongoing harmful [gender inequality](#)."

Parents alone cannot end the cycle of harmful gender inequalities, particularly since they are often pressured to parent within society's gendered norms.

Examples of gendered parenting the researchers saw tended to be greater amongst parents who themselves are in a traditional relationship. Also, gender stereotypes are passed on more strongly by adults who themselves embody stereotypical gender roles and traits.

The authors conclude that addressing society's norms would likely have positive effects, including helping [parents](#) to treat boy and girl children more equally without feeling constrained by social pressures.

More information: The report is available online: [motu-
www.motu.org.nz/wpapers/22_10.pdf](https://www.motu.org.nz/wpapers/22_10.pdf)

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