

## **Parenting perceptions and behaviours in the first three years: Evidence from the LSCDQ (ÉLDEQ) Cohort**

Michel Boivin, Isabelle Morin-Ouellet, Nancy Leblanc, Ginette Dionne, and  
Éric Frenette, Université Laval; Mark Zoccolillo, McGill University;  
Richard E. Tremblay and Daniel Pérusse, University of Montreal

Parenting perceptions and behaviours are seen as the cornerstone of early parent-child dynamics and the infant emotional-social development. Thus, relevant dimensions of parenting and their potential determinants should be assessed as early as possible in the child's life. In the Longitudinal Study of Child Development in Québec (LSCDQ/ÉLDEQ), parenting was examined using mothers' and fathers' self-report of specific perceptions and behaviours regarding their interacting with their recently born infant. The LSCDQ is a prospective longitudinal study of children, first seen at 5 months, who were sampled to be representative of all infants between 59 and 60 gestational weeks of age in 1998, in the province of Quebec. Four dimensions of parental perceptions and behaviours were assessed when the child was aged 5 months (initial  $N_s=2122$  mothers and 1829 fathers), 18 months, and 30 months. Two dimensions, parental self-efficacy and perceived parental impact, centred on mother's and father's beliefs about their role as parent, with two others, parental coercion and parental overprotection, reflecting behavioural tendencies vis-à-vis their infant. Each parent had to indicate on a ten-point scale to what extent each statement accurately described their actions, their thoughts or their feelings. The LSCDQ also collected a variety of other measures in relation to infant characteristics, parent characteristics and measures of the environment. The four dimensions displayed a clear and distinct factor structure and were reliably assessed at all ages. In general, mothers perceived themselves as more efficacious, less coercive and more protective than fathers. For both mothers and fathers, parental self-efficacy and protection diminished over time, whereas coercion increased substantially between 5 months and 30 months. With respect to individual differences, overprotection ( $r_s > .60$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and perceived parental impact ( $r_s > .50$ ,  $p < .001$ ) were the most stable dimensions over time. Parental self-efficacy and coercion ( $r_s > .40$ ,  $p < .001$ ) were moderately stable. Further analyses will examine specific patterns of developmental trajectories with respect to these perceptions and behaviours, as well as their correlates.