



Communicating Research in Clear Language

Resilience in Families of Children With Special Needs

What is the research about?

Many families of children with special needs deal with child behaviour problems that are stressful and can affect their daily routines. The ability of these families to manage this stress is termed “resilience”. This group of researchers explored whether or not factors like child behaviour problems, levels of social support, and financial hardship might affect their family resilience levels.

What did the researchers do?

The researchers asked the families of 475 families of children with special needs, aged 4 to 18, in Alberta, Canada to complete the Family Life Survey. This survey includes questions about income level and family unit type, child behaviour problems, as well as general family functioning.

What did the researchers find?

The researchers found that increased levels of child behaviour problems were related to decreased levels of family resilience. They also found that higher levels of child behaviour problems were related to higher levels of financial hardship and lower levels of social support, which affected general family functioning. The study also showed that no matter the level of child behaviour problems, families typically did better under conditions of high social support and low financial hardship.

Take home message

This study showed that family resilience is strongly affected by social and financial factors. The authors suggested that policymakers ensure that families have access to social supports and funding to reduce financial hardship, instead of solely focusing on how to correct child behaviour problems.

NOTE: The original [Research Report](#) was written by R. Breitzkreuz and colleagues and was published in *Community, Work & Family*. 2014.