

## Public Abstract

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Graduation Term: Winter

Graduation Year: 2006

Title: Dyadic Reciprocity in the Emerging Relationship Between Low-Income African American Mothers and Their Toddlers

Recent theory and research on parent-child relations emphasizes the concept of reciprocity, the bidirectional mutually responsive quality of interaction that describes well-functioning parent-child relationships (Deater-Deckard & O'Connor, 2000; Kochanska, 1997; Maccoby, 1999). Due to its theoretical importance, knowledge about the structure and correlates of dyadic reciprocity is burgeoning.

The present study attempts to extend the usefulness of the construct of dyadic reciprocity to low-income African American mothers and their toddlers using the data collected from a local site participating in the national evaluation of Early Head Start. Eighty-nine mother-toddler dyads were observed in semi-structured play, and their behaviors analyzed and related to child temperament, maternal depression and personality, and attachment. Results suggest that the construct of dyadic reciprocity may be useful in conceptualizing mother-child interaction within African American families and in early intervention services.