




# Acknowledgements

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## JA KIDS Team

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- 



# **Parents' perception of child's temperament and the effect on parent/child interaction.**

**What are the implications for child development outcomes?**

# Introduction





# Statement of the Problem

- Temperament is linked to other areas of child development
- Little or no research within the Caribbean context

What do we need to know about temperament from the Caribbean perspective?

- How is temperament perceived?
- Is temperament important for our understanding of child development?



# Purpose of the study – Why?

- To begin by addressing these questions
- To start an investigation on temperament in the Caribbean context

To do this, the study will begin at the base level by investigating how perceptions of child temperament affect the mother-child interaction.



# Definitions

## Earlier definitions of temperament:

- individual differences in reactivity and self-regulation (Rothbart, 1981; Rothbart, 1986)
- constitutional basis (Plomin, 1986)
- stability that interacts overtime with the environment (Plomin, 1986)

## This study

- The definition of temperament is defined in terms of manageability as either easy or difficult.



**Interaction is measured by looking at:**

- **frequency of play, Eg: 18 months Questionnaire, Ques: D2 – “How often do you play with the baby?”**
- **activities**
- **disciplinary actions with the child**
- **Positive interaction is seen as interaction that brings pleasure to both baby and mother, for example, play.**
- **Harsh punishment is seen as negative interaction**



## Research Question

**Does mother's perception of her child as easy/difficult to manage affect her interaction with the child?**





## Hypothesis

**The mother's perception of her child as difficult to manage is linked to negative mother-child interaction.**



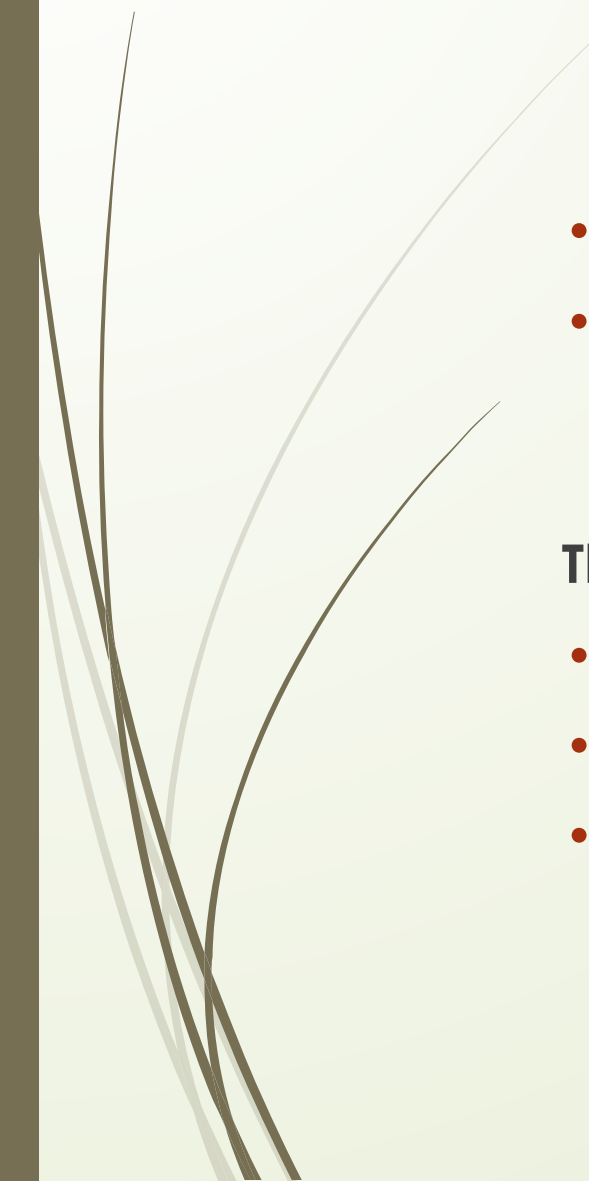
# Literature Review



# Background

- **The New York Longitudinal Study (Thomas, Chess and Birch, 1956)**
- **Study was groundbreaking because they were able to investigate and collate various aspects of temperament**

**They found three temperament dimensions:**

- **The easy child**
  - **The difficult child**
  - **Slow to warm up**
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# Further investigations

## Sanson & Rothbart (1995)

Finding a direct link between child temperament and parenting was difficult


- methodological practice of using parent reports in investigations was often influenced by parent characteristics and parenting history

## Rothbart (1981)

- considered any report on child temperament would be framed within the parent-child interaction within the child's environment.

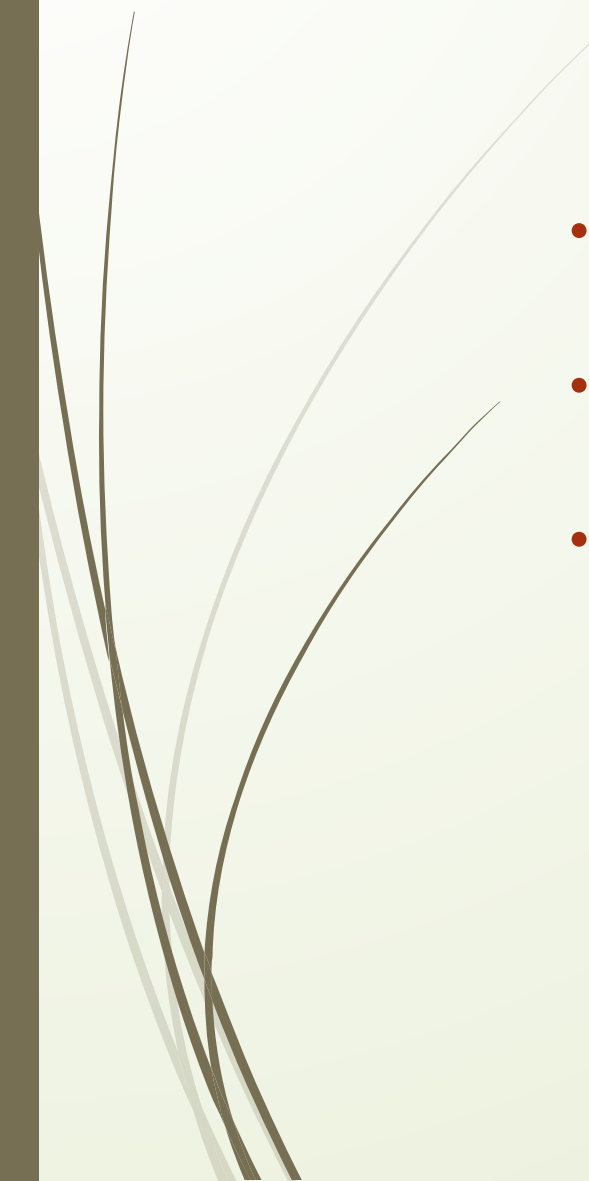


## **Bates (1980)**

- **No consensus on investigating the concept on the difficult temperament**
  - **There may be individual differences in what mothers perceive as difficult in assessing their child's temperament**
  - **Difficult temperament should be viewed within the reciprocal parent-child relationship and its quality**
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# Why is parent perception of children important?

- Parents are an invaluable source of information for researchers (Mantymaa et al 2006; Rothbart, 1986)
  - Parents have unlimited access to their children that researchers are not afforded (Rothbart, 1981)
  - Parental perception of the child influences parenting style and behavior (Rubin et al, 2010; Bates and Lee, 1985; Mantymaa et al, 2006)
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# Some links to temperament

- Parenting (Rothbart, 1995)
  - Attachment (Miyake et al, 1985)
  - School-readiness (Rispoli, 2012)
  - Behavioural problems (Bates and Lee, 1985)
  - Emotional temperament in infancy was a predictor of emotional difficulties, conduct problems and symptoms of hyperactivity/inattention at age 5 (Abulizi et al 2014)
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# What factors influence parental perception of child temperament?

## Maternal characteristics

- mothers with lower education level tend to perceive their children as exhibiting more difficult behavior (Fox et al, 2010)

## Parental distress and mother's mental health problems

- Mothers with mental health problems were likely to see their children as more difficult (Mantymaa et al, 2006).





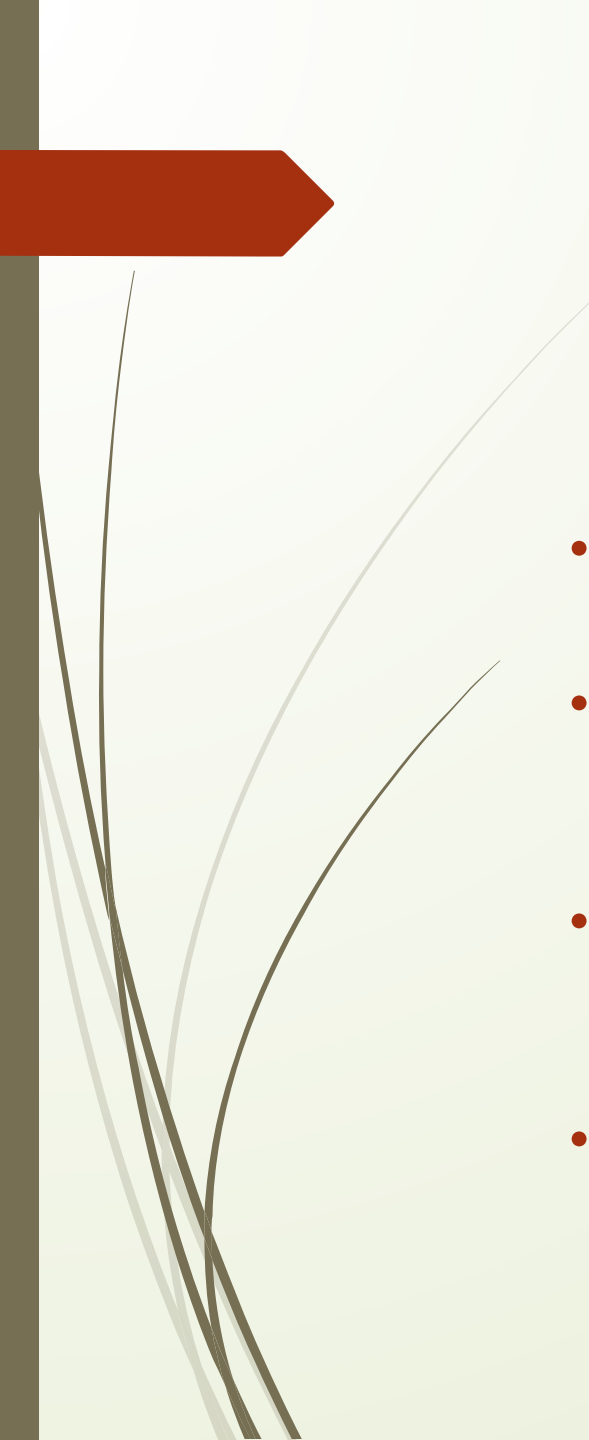
# Does the literature show a link between child temperament and parent-child interaction?

## Bates (1985)

- difficult children had a more conflicted relationship with their mother than do easy or average to manage children
- They tended to resist controls more and their mothers tended to use more intrusive controls

## Matymaa (2006)

- Intrusive parenting and poor infant interactive (avoidant and non-communicative) behavior were linked



# What is the link between parent-child interaction and child development outcomes?

- Spending time with parents increased verbal skills in children (Takeuchi et al, 2015)
- Parent-child interaction had a more positive and consistent impact on school-readiness than time spent in childcare (Cornell & Prinz, 2002)
- Reading to children regularly or exposure to books was linked to receptive language skills and reading well by the end of grade 3 (Senechal & LeFevre, 2002).
- Parental interaction with highly reactive pre-term babies at 6 months was linked to cognitive functioning (exploration, object relatedness and memory) at 12 months (Gueron-Sela, Atzaba-Poria, Meiri & Marks, 2016)



# Methods

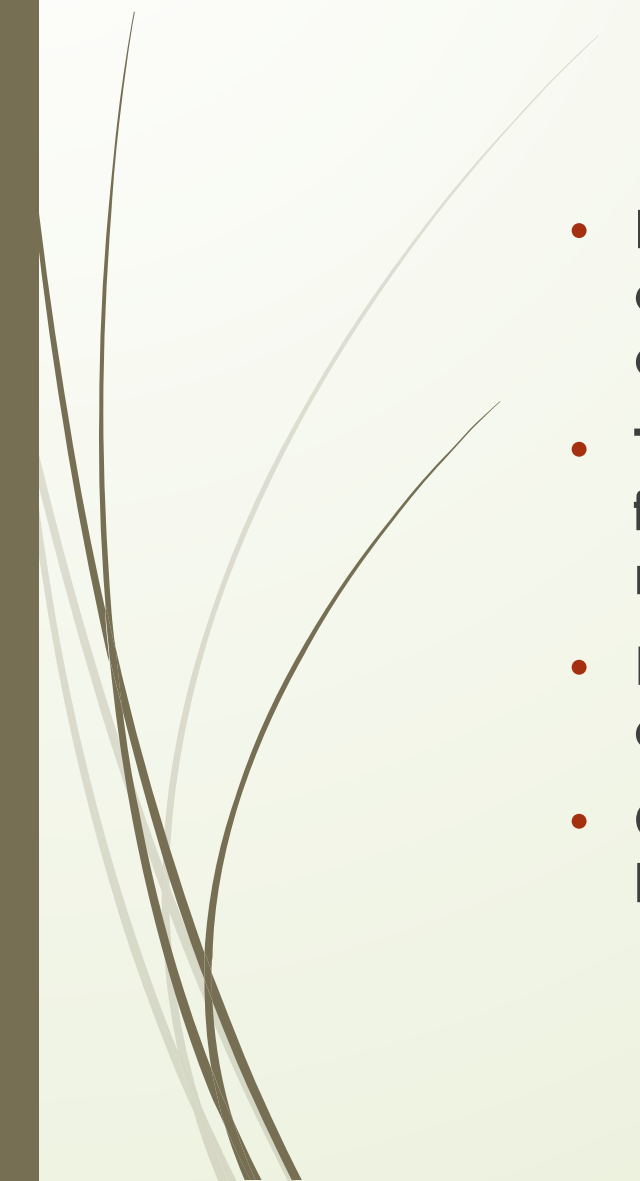


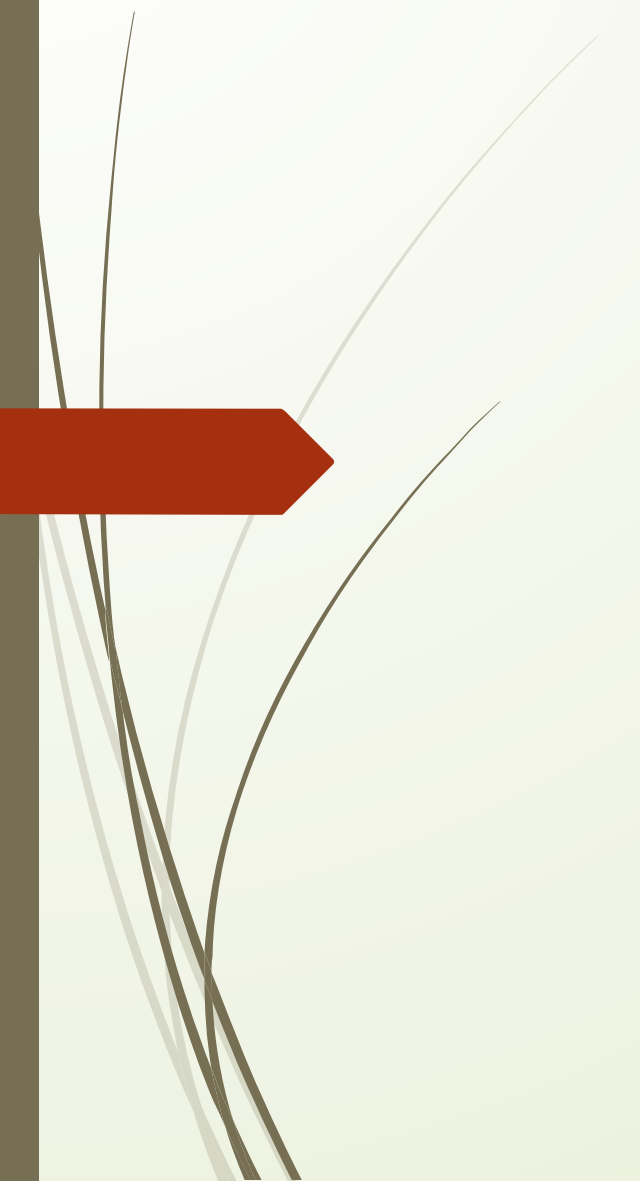
# Participants

- The data utilized in this study is from JA KIDS Birth Cohort Study
- Approximately 10,000 families from across all parishes took part in the study
- The population size of the current presentation is 4,500 which is based on the mothers who are represented questionnaires chosen for analysis
- 50.8% boys
- 49.2% girls



# Procedures

- Participants were asked to complete questionnaires about their child's development, family structure, relationships and home environment
  - Temperament was assessed based on parents' report to questions, for example: Do you consider your baby generally easy to manage?
  - Responses to this question were (1) yes, easy to manage (2) neither, easy no difficult (3) no, hard/difficult
  - Child development was not independently assessed but were based on parents' perception of how their child was developing.
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# Results



# Perceived Temperament

## Overall Parents' perception of child temperament

- 59% mothers perceive their baby as easy to manage
- 10.8 % babies perceived their baby as difficult

## Feeding

- 55% babies perceived as less difficult than other babies
- 9% perceived as more difficult than other babies

## Sleeping

- 45% mothers perceived their baby as less difficult
- 14% mothers perceive their baby as more difficult

## Crying

- 45% of mothers perceived their baby as less difficult
- 11% of mothers perceived their baby as more difficult



# Temperament and Interaction

## Easy/Difficult to manage and frequency of play


- 91% of mothers who perceived their child as easy to manage played with their child every day
- 85% of mothers who perceived their baby as difficult played with their child every day

## Easy/Difficult and doing activities

For activities such as reading with baby and playing with toys:

- 60% mothers who perceived her child as easy often read and played using toys during play with their baby
- 54% mothers who perceived her child as difficult often read and used toys during play with their baby



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- For perceived easy to manage children, 75% of mothers named things for and counted with the baby
  - For those perceived as difficult, 68% and 60% of mothers named things for and counted with the baby respectively
  - 68% of mothers who perceived their baby as easy to manage took them for walks
  - 60% of mothers who perceived their baby as difficult took them for walks
  - Doing something special with the baby was the least popular activity for both groups of mothers at 46%



# Temperament and Harsh Punishment

- Shouting at the baby represented the highest negative interaction score. 70% of perceived difficult babies' mothers shouted at them, compared to 59% of easy to manage babies
- Slapping was the second most common negative interaction as difficult children represented 64% of the babies slapped compared to 49% of easy to manage children
- 13% of difficult children were pinched by their mothers while 4% of easy children were



# **Implications on Child Development Outcomes**



# Child Development Outcomes

## Reading and language skills

- 65% of mothers who reported reading often to their babies, reported that at 18 months, the baby was able to say ten words that meant specific things
- 87% of mothers reported that at 18 months their babies had developed receptive language skills

## Taking for walks and motor development

- 92% of mothers who often took their baby for walks, reported the baby walking well by him/herself at 18 months
- 82% of mothers reported that by 18 months, the baby was climbing furniture to get what he/she wanted without parent's help



# Discussion



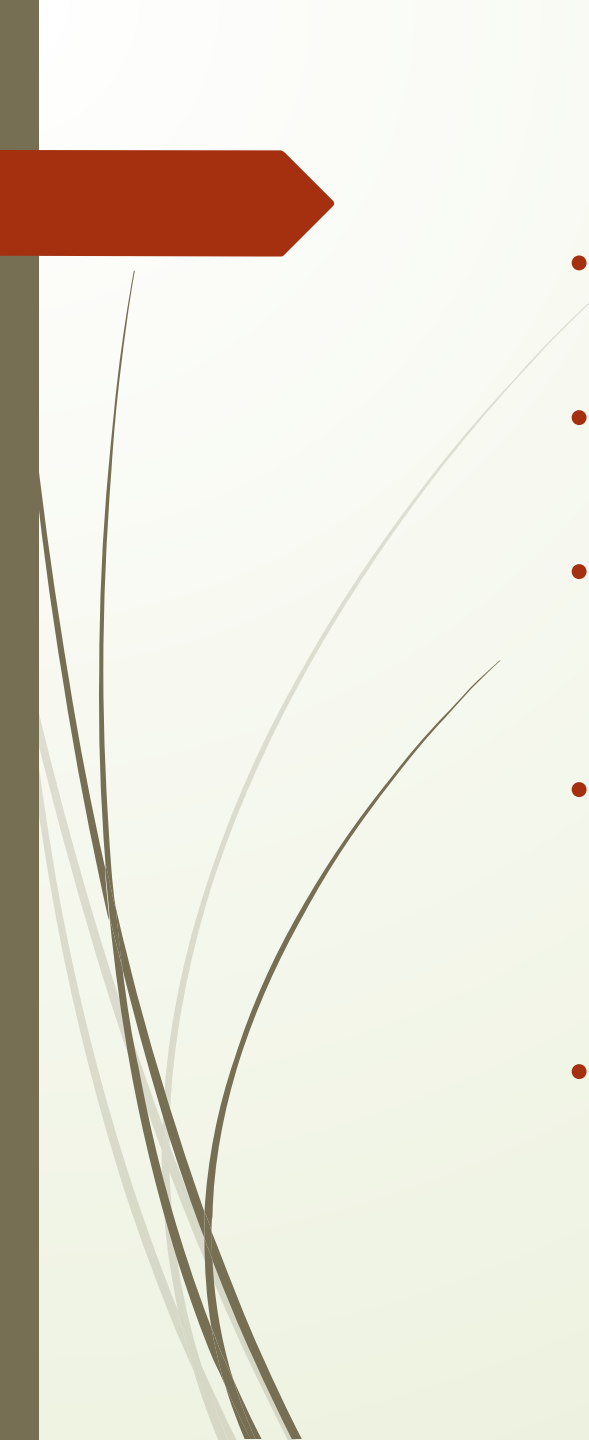
**RQ: Does mother's perception of her child as easy/difficult to manage affect her interaction with the child?**

**A: Yes**

**H: The mother's perception of her child as difficult to manage is linked to negative mother-child interaction**

**A: Yes**



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- **10% difficult babies in the sample is consistent with previous research (Thomas, Chess and Birch, 1968 in Bates, 1985)**
  - **There is no significant difference between perceived temperament in our sample and positive mother-child interaction**
  - **There is a link between perceived child difficultness and harsh punishments as harsh punishments scores were higher for difficult children**
  - **The assumption that perceived difficultness would reduce the interaction frequency and type between babies and their mother was not proven because all mothers reported having good interaction with their baby**
  - **Although negative interaction in the form of punishment was consistently higher for difficult babies, all parents reported punishment for both categories of babies**



# Further Study and Policy Recommendation

## Further Study

- What are the contributing factors that influence mother's perception of her child's temperament?
- What factors mediate harsh punishment in mother-child interaction?

## Policy

- Systematic parental education on the importance of parent-child interaction on child development with particular focus on fostering positive interactions



**THE END**

