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Children's Skills, Interests, and Play in Object and Spatial Visual Domains: Maternal Evaluations & Field Observations

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Abstract

This study explored individual differences in visual-object and visual-spatial play preferences and performance in 4–8-year-old children. First, mothers have completed surveys about their own and their children's abilities and traits. Subsequently, children's play behavior was observed at field study organized in the form of an edutainment festival. Mothers' self-reported abilities correlated with their evaluations of the corresponding abilities in their children but showed weak or no links to children's learning interests and play. Parenting practices were more strongly associated with children's abilities and interests than maternal traits. Specifically, maternal control was linked to children's visual-spatial play, while warmth and structure correlated with various skills and interests. Children's play preferences predicted by mothers aligned with observed play choices, but actual play behavior was more related to children's own traits than their mothers' characteristics. These findings highlight the role of parenting in shaping children's visual skills, learning interests, and play behaviors.

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