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## Mothers supported by maternal grandparents less 'strict and controlling' according to new study

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Sun 4 August 2024 at 3:00 pm GMT+8 · 2-min read



Credit: Getty Images

**A new study reveals mothers supported with childcare by their own parents, are more likely to be caring and less inclined to be authoritarian with their children.**

[More than half of grandparents look after grandchildren](#) while their parents work, with a lot of parents [trapped into living near grandparents](#) as they have no other childcare options. Such is the involvement of older generations in caring for grandchildren, they can even be entitled to their own [childcare credit](#).

For mothers with involved grandparents from their own side of the family, this could be good news. According to new [research](#), mums whose parents help out with childcare are more likely show their children warmth than those with no support from the maternal side. By the time their children were aged four, the study found mothers supported by their parents were less strict and controlling than others.

By the time their children reached the age of six, mothers supported by their own parents were found to be more engaged with positive parenting, demonstrating increased warmth, responsiveness, and providing a stimulating home environment.

To reach this conclusion, mothers were asked to report family well-being when their child was between four and six years old. When the children turned 10, they were asked to describe any depressive symptoms. This gave researchers enough data to analyse who was supporting the mother and make correlations against the their reported behaviour and happiness of their children.

The study also looked at the impact of support from paternal grandparents, a mix of both maternal and paternal grandparents together, and outside help from domestic carers. None of these had any impact on whether the supported mother demonstrated more warmth and less authoritarian behaviour towards her children - only having her own parents helping made that particular difference.

Associate Professor [Pei Pei Setoh](#), director of Nanyang Technological University's Early Cognition Lab, spoke to [Phys.org](#) about the research. She says "While maternal grandparents, paternal grandparents, and domestic helpers all have the potential to provide instrumental assistance and emotional encouragement when it comes to childcare duties, our study found that childcare support from maternal grandparents was the most beneficial."