

Design of an Observational Study on the Contextual Determinants of Parental Overprotection

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Introduction

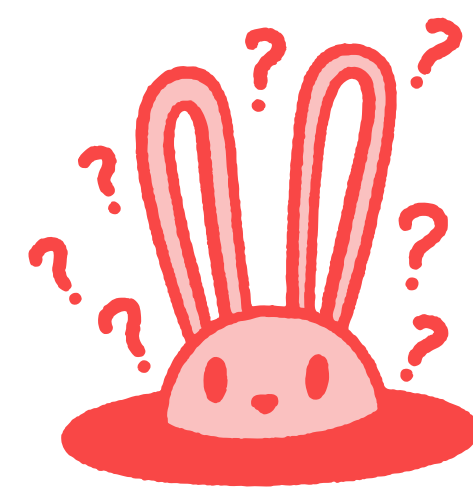
• What is parental overprotection ?

→ It refers to a level of parental protection that goes **beyond what the child or adolescent actually needs** (Thomasgard et al., 1995).

• Why is it a problem?

→ It is linked to:

- **Lower autonomy** in adolescents
- **More internalizing and externalizing problems** (e.g., anxiety, depression) (Van Petegem et al., 2020)



• What causes overprotection ?

- Not only psychological factors, but also **social pressures** :
- The ideal of the **"perfect parent"** (Lamprianidou et al., 2025)
- Economic insecurity (Van Petegem et al., 2024)

- **Child factors** : temperament, developmental difficulties
- **Parent factors** : personality, life history, emotional needs
- But : **very few studies** explore **contextual factors** such as socio)economic pressures : ideal of the perfect parent; financial insecurity, ... (Venard et al., 2023)

• Our study's goal

→ To explore whether **overprotection** is linked to **parents' representations of their context**, including :

- Their perception of the **country's economic situation**
- Their view of **future opportunities** for their child

(Venard et al., 2023; Doepke & Zilibotti, 2019)



Timeline of the session

Method

• Participants

- 100 parent-adolescent dyads (adolescents aged 16-18).
- Ongoing recruitment. (N = 15):
- 80% mothers – 20% fathers
- 65% have at least a master's degree
- 60% of parents live together
- Mean household income: €3400-5400
- Mean perceived SES (Adler scale): 3.6/10 (1=highest SES, 10=lowest)



• Procedure

Each dyad completes **2 video-recorded tasks** :

1. Conflict Discussion Task (10 min) :

Discuss a disagreement about the adolescent's future (education or career).

→ Goal : reach a compromise.

2. Speech Task :

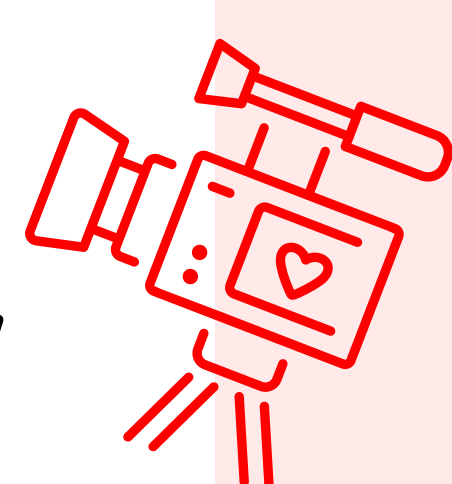
The adolescent prepares and presents a 3-minute speech for a job interview.

→ The parent may assist them (e.g., camera handling, suggestions).

• Measures

- **Questionnaires** (pre- and post-tasks): overprotection MOPS; Chevrier et al. (2023), autonomy support (P-PASS; Mageau et al., 2015), expectations (Wuyts et al., 2015, 2015), financial perceptions (Vander Elst et al., 2014), etc.
- **Observational coding** of both tasks by five trained researchers (SafeSorry team).

→ Focus : behavioral indicators of overprotection.



The components of overprotection

We based our behavioral coding identifying four key dimensions:

1. Anxious rearing

→ Excessive worry about the child's emotions or ability to complete a task

2. Premature problem solving

→ Parent intervenes before the child can try or ask for help

3. Infantilization

→ Treating the adolescent as younger or less competent than they are

4. Privacy invasion

→ Unwarranted physical or verbal intrusions into the adolescent's private sphere

