

ARE FOOD PARENTING PRACTICES GENDERED?

It is well known that food parenting practices have a significant impact on young children's eating behaviour. However, past research has mainly focused on maternal food practices without involving fathers. To better understand the influence of both parents on their children's eating behaviour, Kaat Philippe conducted a ground-breaking study in which 105 couples (105 mothers and 105 fathers of children aged between 2 and 6 years) filled in a survey to assess their practices and how they perceive their child's eating behaviour.

Results showed that fathers and mothers perceived their child's eating behaviour in similar ways despite mothers taking significantly more meals with their child than fathers. Results also showed that mothers are mainly responsible for shopping for food and cooking meals in most families. Fathers reported using significantly more pressure to eat and food as reward as well as serving more "child menu". Finally, in households where both parents used higher levels of pressure to eat, the child showed a significantly lower food enjoyment and higher level of food neophobia.

In conclusion, these findings underline the value of studying the role of each parent in child feeding research. They also highlight the counterproductive effect of contingent (food as reward) and coercive (pressure) strategies.



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To know more

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Key words

Parenting practices; feeding practices; eating; gender; child; eating behavior