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NEWSLETTER

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## **The Influence of Parent-Child Separation on the Development of Children: Evidence from the Survey of Migrant Children in Beijing**

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**B**ASED on a survey of 2,367 fourth-grade migrant children in Beijing's functional development zone (2016-2017), this article explores the impact of parent-child separation on children's development from three dimensions: academic performance, non-cognitive development, and physical health. The brief is as follows:

- The research focuses on the following issues: First, will the separation of parent and child have an impact on children's academic performance, non-cognitive abilities, and physical health? Second, is there any difference in the impact of separation between father and mother? Third, whether this difference will be heterogeneous based on the gender of children.
- Data source and variable description: The survey follows the principle of three-stage cluster sampling. The surveyed students were all from fourth grade of primary school and are at the same education level, so the student development indicators are horizontally comparable. The core variables of this study include core explanatory variables and explained variables. Among them, the core explanatory variables are dummy variables of parent-child separation. Including separation from father and mother. The core explained variables include academic performance, non-cognitive development, and institutional health.
- Research results:
  - i. The impact of separation from parent-child on children's academic performance: separation from mother has a stronger impact on children's academic performance than separation from father.
  - ii. The impact of parent-child separation on children's non-cognitive abilities: separation from mothers has no significant impact on non-cognitive abilities in all dimensions; however, separation from the father has a significant nega-

- tive impact on children's self-esteem, self-control, interpersonal communication, school adaptation, leadership, and cooperation.
- iii. The impact of parent-child separation on children's physical health: separation from mothers has a significantly greater impact on children's physical health than separation from fathers.
  - iv. Analysis of the heterogeneity of the impact of parent-child separation on children's development: parent-child separation differs a lot in gender; for boys, separation from mothers has a significant negative impact on their academic performance, but separation from fathers has no significant impact on male academic performance, while for girls, separation from their mothers significantly affects their English scores, and separation from their fathers significantly affects their mathematics scores; but separation from their mothers has no significant impact on girls' Mathematics and Chinese scores. Similarly, separation from fathers has no significant impact on girls' language and English scores.
- Conclusions and policy recommendations:
    - i. Change the misconception of "pay attention to money, not the time" that exists in progress of children's growth, and do a good job in the important duty of guiding children.
    - ii. Schools and teachers should concentrate on students who have separated parent-child, ask more about their problems and difficulties in study and life, and promptly guide and communicate; at the same time, the school should establish relevant psychological counseling institutions or groups to promptly discover and ease the psychological problems of students.
    - iii. Relevant departments should gradually abolish the discriminative policies related to household registration division on employment, education, and medical, so as to reduce the occurrence of parent-child separation from the source.

*Source: China Economics of Education Review, 2019; 4(6): 93-108.*