

Mothers versus nursery teachers: how competent do they feel toward ADHD children?

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The ability to control pupils in a classroom is a critical factor in any educational setting. Moreover, educators' tendency to refer students for special mental health services has been found to relate to their sense of self-efficacy. On the other hand, quality of parenting is related to parents' perceived ability to deal with difficult child behaviour. The present study sought to compare mothers and nursery teachers regarding their perceived ability to control child hyperactive behaviour at home and in class.

Two questionnaires were used, composed by a vignette describing either an imaginary hyperactive boy or girl, followed by the "Difficult Behaviour Self-Efficacy Scale" (Hastings & Brown, 2002). The sample consisted of 115 Greek prospective nursery teachers and 118 mothers of normal pre-schoolers, enrolled in kindergartens in Athens. Participants were asked to imagine that the child presented was either their pupil or their own child.

Results showed that mothers feel significantly more competent to deal with child hyperactive behaviour than prospective educators [$F(1,228)=13.18, p=.000$]. Moreover, both samples rate boys' hyperactive behaviour as easier to control than girls' [$F(1,228)=16.09, p=.000$]. It seems that, for educators, who have to attain a comfortable classroom environment, male hyperactivity is perceived as a threatening factor to the attainment of their instructional goals. These results point to the need for better training of prospective educators to deal with behaviour problems in classroom, as their sense of self-efficacy may influence the practices used with children, leading to either amelioration or aggravation of the disruptive symptoms already present in ADHD children.