Family type plays an integral role in children’s development. Family theories outline the interactions which occur between family members. For more information on the theories of families, click on the link below.

Family Theories

Only child families

Many couples are now choosing to have children who will never have any siblings. Literature suggests that these children are often viewed as being spoilt, self-indulgent, lonely, and maladjusted; however, research does not agree with this view. Only children appear to be bright and successful, self-reliant, resourceful, and popular with other children. "A major reason for this may be that only children have somewhat closer relationships with their parents, who exert more pressure for mastery and accomplishment." (Berk, 1996, Pg. 505). Only children often have more pressure placed upon them to excel. They may have often high expectations for school and sporting results placed upon them. Only children miss out on the growing and learning and forms of socialisation which comes with having siblings. Only children have the advantage of not having to fight for their parents' attention and may have the opportunity of more one-on-one interactions. The one-child family has both pros and cons, as does every family lifestyle (Berk 2000, Papalia & Olds 1995).

Large families

Children of large families obviously experience different conditions from those in smaller or one child families. Children in larger families have the advantage of having relationships with siblings. These relationships and interactions give them the opportunity to have companionship, emotional support and assistance while they are growing up. Children in larger families often experience degrees of rivalry and may need to fight for parents’ attention. The positive interactions that occur between siblings contribute to perspective taking, moral maturity, and competence in relating to other children (Berk 2000).