

## Perceived Social Support and Parental Burden among Parents of Children with Developmental Disabilities: A Correlational Study

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### ABSTRACT

This research looked into how parents of kids with developmental challenges view their access to help from others, alongside feelings of stress tied to parenting. Selected through targeted recruitment, both mothers and fathers took part in a numerical analysis exploring links between variables. To collect responses, two established tools were applied: the MSPSS - developed in 1988 by Zimet, Dahlem, Zimet, and Farley - and the ZBI, introduced in 1980 by Zarit, Reever, and Bach-Peterson. Alongside these, background details such as age, sex, and household makeup were recorded. Analysis happened afterward using SPSS, a system built for examining social science data. Among families raising kids with developmental challenges, how much help they feel they receive connects closely to their sense of strain. Though not every parent reports the same experience, those noticing stronger backing from others often carry less emotional weight. When support feels available, stress tends to ease - this pattern emerged clearly in the data. What stands out is how relationships around the caregiver shape daily coping, even without formal services involved.

**Keywords:** *Parental burden, Social support, Parents of children with developmental disabilities*

Parenting demands steady attention to emotional, cognitive, and bodily needs. For families raising children with developmental challenges, daily tasks often become more complex because extra help is usually required. With increased responsibilities, stress, exhaustion, and emotional strain can slowly build - this weight goes by the term parental burden. Understanding the factors behind it opens paths to better well-being for mothers and fathers, which in turn strengthens care given to kids. Though unseen, such efforts shape long-term outcomes quietly.

Hope often lingers where least expected. Sometimes it is a glance across the room that steadies someone. Other times, silence shared between two people carries more weight than speech ever could. A message sent late at night might arrive exactly when needed. Questions asked gently open doors closed by fear. Presence matters more than solutions offered too soon. Even small acts echo louder than grand promises made aloud. When pressure builds, having someone nearby changes how challenges feel - even if nothing about the situation shifts.

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Connections matter because they shape responses; reactions soften with reassurance from those we know. Sometimes guidance comes from neighbours, sometimes from groups tied by shared experience rather than blood. Each interaction adds weight against isolation, building resilience slowly over time. Comfort flows in different forms - not always loud, often steady. People do not face everything alone simply because networks exist in ordinary places. Emotional steadiness grows where trust exists and attention gets offered freely. Help arrives woven into daily contact, rarely dramatic yet deeply effective.

### **Definition and Concept of Social Support**

Bodily ease often appears alongside comfort found in human connections. A person's ability to endure difficulty strengthens if they believe they matter- particularly where understanding is present. Because connection offers grounding, hardship becomes less sharp. Where care exists, isolation fades slightly. When individuals maintain strong relationships, coping with pressure, sorrow, or anxiety becomes less difficult. Research links such bonds to improved mental and physical well-being. When individuals feel backed by friends or family, they usually report greater happiness in life. Supportive relationships also build strength during tough times, shaping overall wellness in quiet but meaningful ways.

### **History of Social Support**

Though once overlooked, ties among individuals drew growing interest within psychology during the 1950s. Health - both emotional and bodily - began being linked to these bonds. As a result, researchers turned their eyes toward shared human presence. Tough moments in life, it was wondered, might hit less hard when someone else is near. Attention drifted from isolated minds to the spaces between people. Those with reliable friends or family often handled pressure more steadily than those without. While early findings were tentative, they pointed toward a pattern - supportive ties tend to act like buffers under strain.

Now it turns out that feeling close to others builds inner resilience, not just happiness. Over time, relationships where support flows freely began mattering more in fields such as therapy, medicine, and studies on human interaction. At first, they were barely noticed, yet today those ties shape much of what we know about staying mentally sound. One area looks at healing through community, another at personal development, still another at handling everyday stress - each peering through its own lens.

### **Parents facing challenges raising children with disabilities**

Starting differently each time, families find their path while helping a child grow in distinct directions. Sometimes round-the-clock care fits into days, lessons shift based on what works best, appointments shape weekly rhythms, doctor visits settle into routine. This pattern pulls time in many directions, duties build without notice, finances adapt to unfamiliar demands. A schedule normal for some becomes a full redesign for others simply to stay steady. Caring without pause often brings tiredness in body, strain in mind, or withdrawal from others. Worries arise - not only about what lies ahead for the child but also whether support can last over time. Such pressures shape how heavy the role feels, along with inner emotional states.

### **How Social Support Connects to Parents' Stress Levels**

Help from others makes parenting duties easier to manage. When caregivers get advice, care-related assistance, or emotional comfort from relatives, neighbours, or peers, their ability to handle daily pressures grows stronger. Knowing such aid exists - even without using it - lowers tension levels and supports mental balance among mothers and fathers. Without these

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connections, pressure tends to build up, along with loneliness. For this reason, examining how connectedness affects strain at home matters greatly when shaping ways to strengthen household stability and adult resilience.

### *Need for Study*

Long ago, kids with disabilities often disappeared from view - hidden by silence, shaped by ignorance. Nowadays, responsibility shifts toward families who stand firmly beside their children needing extra support. Help arrives through specialists, structured learning environments replace exclusion, repeated sessions aim at growth. Yet even with effort poured into daily care, weight builds - slow, steady, unseen. Strain surfaces not just in bodies worn thin, but minds stretched across endless concerns. Money pressures linger like background noise; tomorrow remains uncertain, always looming. Fatigue settles deep despite love that refuses to waver. Without help from others or close relationships, pressure grows steadily. Managing care tasks usually falls to just one person, slowly wearing them down. When help is nowhere in sight, the weight grows harder to carry. Relief often comes not from effort but from who shows up. A single steady presence can shift how heavy the load appears. Over days, small supports add up more than grand gestures ever do. This study examines such circumstances by highlighting hidden challenges managed without notice. Focus moves to collective responsibility that upholds ongoing support for kids facing disabilities.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

One study led by Roesardhyati in 2025 looked at how emotional support connects to mental stress among nursing students in Indonesia. From different parts of Java, seven educational institutions supplied data from 734 individuals involved. Rather than conducting conversations, researchers used the MSPSS instrument to measure each person's sense of accessible social aid. To spot signs of low mood, they relied on responses gathered through PHQ-9 forms. Rather than standard averages, statistical ties emerged via Spearman's nonparametric technique during review. Almost forty percent of students displayed notable signs of depression, according to findings. Depressive feelings decreased when family backing increased - evidence pointed clearly toward this inverse pattern ( $\rho = -0.49$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Where household encouragement stood firm, emotional strain tended to be less severe. Meanwhile, assistance from peers did not noticeably alter psychological discomfort. Emphasis emerged on nurturing bonds within the home via learning initiatives, given their measurable influence on student mood stability.

During 2024, work by Kuharić and colleagues explored how caregiving strain is perceived across different viewpoints. This project included 504 couples - each made up of one person giving care and another receiving it - based in the U.S., primarily married or partnered individuals sharing a home. Rather than limiting data to those providing support alone, insights came from both parties involved in the caring relationship. To assess pressure linked to caregiving, researchers applied the CarerQol tool, capturing aspects such as money worries, bodily demands, feelings, and connections with others. Where opinions matched - or didn't - between giver and receiver was examined through statistics known as weighted kappa ( $\kappa$ ) alongside intraclass correlation coefficients (ICC). Agreement emerged between care recipients' views on burden - labeled Proxy-CB - and caregivers' own accounts. Though emotional pressure matched moderately ( $\kappa = 0.48$ ), financial effects aligned more closely ( $\kappa = 0.66$ ). The CarerQol-7D Index recorded an ICC of 0.58; overall burden measured 0.76. From the CR-SPB perspective, however, perceived stress often seemed less intense than stated.

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When both angles enter view, understanding deepens. Insight shifts. Support planning reflects reality better because of it.

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### ***Problem Statement:***

The study was attempted to find the relationship between Perceived Social Support and Parental Burden.

#### ***Aim:***

The purpose of this study is to explore the correlation between perceived social support and parental burden among parents of children with developmental disabilities.

#### ***Objectives:***

- To determine the extent of perceived social support experienced by Parents of Children with Developmental Disabilities.
- To determine the extent of parental burden experienced by Parents of Children with Developmental Disabilities.
- To investigate the connection between parents of disabled children's perceived social support and parental burden.

#### ***Hypothesis:***

- **H<sub>0</sub>:** There will be no significant correlation between Perceived Social Support and Parental Burden.

#### ***Variables:***

- Independent Variable – Perceived Social Support
- Dependent Variable – Parental burden

#### ***Research design:***

This research examines how perceived social support connects with parental burden in families raising children with disabilities, using numerical data analysis. Average values, spread of scores, visual bars, and circular graphs help show patterns within the findings. To explore links between these factors, Pearson's method measures how strongly they move together across cases. Relationships between variables reveal how changes in one may relate to shifts in another, based on observed trends in responses.

#### ***Sample size and sampling technique:***

This research includes 150 parents whose children have disabilities. Selection occurs through purposeful methods, focusing on those fulfilling specific entry conditions. Those involved must be caregivers of disabled kids fitting defined requirements. The aim centers on exploring how perceived support from others links to stress felt by these mothers and fathers. Examination targets connections between social backing and parenting demands among the chosen group.

#### ***Tools used:***

- Multidimensional scale of Perceived social support (MSPSS).
- Caregiver burden scale.

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- **Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support:** The Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support, developed in 1988 by Zimet, Dahlem, Zimet, and Farley, measures how people perceive their availability to supportive connections. The core consists of twelve statements that focus solely on emotional support attributed to family, friends, or intimate associates. Four questions come from each group, measuring what one perceives to be available rather than the actual aid provided. A seven-step rating system applies throughout, starting at complete disagreement and moving steadily toward full agreement. When totals rise, so does the sense of being supported, though nothing about timing or frequency enters the scoring. Despite its brevity, the tool finds frequent use across studies where personal networks matter. Because administration requires little time, researchers often turn to it when clarity matters more than depth. Despite its age, the framework stays intact, built on straightforward language instead of intricate formatting. Stability in scoring shows up clearly, with reliability values most often sitting between 0.85 and 0.91. Since outcomes are both steady and relevant, scientists regularly turn to the MSPSS while studying personal responses to pressure, availability of assistance, and psychological well-being.
- **Caregiver Burden Scale:** Although originally developed for those supporting people with long-term impairments, the Caregiver Burden Scale functions as a personal assessment tool. Twenty-two questions make up its structure, focusing on feelings and perceptions linked to care duties. Scoring follows a pattern where choices go from "not at all" through to "often," forming four distinct levels. Responses receive values between one and four based on how regularly burdens appear. As frequency increases, so does the assigned number for each answer. Each of the five aspects - general strain, isolation, disappointment, emotional involvement, and surroundings - is captured by the tool. For every domain, an average value comes from its corresponding questions. When averages rise, so does pressure in that particular part of caregiving. Challenges both personal and daily become clearer through the use of the CBS. With consistent performance noted in various samples, one analysis highlighted the tool's reliability. Ranging from 0.70 to 0.87, most subscales show acceptable internal consistency. The environment domain reveals somewhat lower stability. Over time, retesting produces closely aligned values. Given its dependable output, the CBS frequently appears in studies assessing caregiving burden.

### *Inclusion Criteria*

1. Those caring for children diagnosed with autism, ADHD, or cerebral palsy qualify. Raising a youth facing learning difficulties also meets the criteria.
2. Those who raising kids day by day, making choice about their routines, qualify as main care taker
3. Caregivers whose children fall within a span from 3 up through 18 may take part - adjustable depending on research needs.
4. Parents who can read and understand English.
5. Families offering clear permission while choosing freely to take part in the research.
6. Families where an adult has lived alongside the child throughout the last twelve months provide steady day-to-day support.

### *Exclusion Criteria*

1. Parents of children without developmental disabilities.

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2. Parents who are not primary caregivers (for example, if caregiving is primarily done by grandparents or hired caregivers).
3. Parents of children with acute medical conditions or chronic physical illnesses only, without developmental disabilities.
4. Parents currently undergoing severe psychiatric illness (e.g., psychosis, severe depression) that may affect their ability to respond accurately.
5. Parents who do not provide consent or withdraw their participation.
6. Parents who have already participated in a similar study to avoid bias.

### **Statistical analysis:**

To study the relationship between Perceived social support and parental burden, the Pearson correlation coefficient will be used. The collected data were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics in order to present summarised information about the variables and highlight potential relationships between the variables and give explanations for the relationship.

### **Procedure:**

The purpose of this study will be to examine the relationship between Perceived social support and parental burden among parents of disabled children. To achieve this, the Multidimensional scale of Perceived Social Support and the Caregiver Burden Scale will be employed as research instruments. The survey will comprise both scales along with items collecting demographic information. The questionnaires will be administered to the participants, and data will be collected from both of the parent. Participants will be selected using the purposive sampling technique, and the sample will consist of 150 parents of disabled children. Upon completion of data collection, the gathered data will be analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

This chapter examines the findings and interpretations of a study conducted to better understand the relationship between Perceived Social Support and Parental Burden among Parents of Children with Developmental Disabilities.

**Table 1** Descriptive data depicting the mean and standard deviation of Perceived Social Support and Parental Burden.

Variables	Mean	Standard Deviation	N
Perceived Social Support	2.57	1.265	150
Parental Burden	62.27	18.124	150

Meaningful averages and spreads appear clearly within the data summary. With 150 participants counted, Perceived Social Support shows an average score of 2.57 alongside a variation measure of 1.265. As for Parental Burden, values center around 62.27, where fluctuation reaches nearly 18.124 points across responses.

**Table 2** A correlational study of Perceived Social Support and Parental Burden.

Variables	Pearson's Correlation	r value	Decision
Perceived Social Support	1		
Parental Burden		-0.719	Rejecting (H <sub>0</sub> )

*The correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (two-tailed).*

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A study examined links between sensed community backing and parenting difficulty for adults caring for youth with learning differences. For those tending children facing growth hurdles, emotional relief often appeared alongside belief in available aid. One hundred fifty participants contributed data. As one element increased, the other typically decreased – greater comfort from others linked to reduced burden ( $r = -0.719, p < 0.01$ ). From a different angle, individuals perceiving stronger support generally described reduced pressure. Not identical, yet these elements showed clear ties. Should caregivers mention receiving emotional, practical, or social aid – be it from family, friends, or community networks – their reported stress typically decreased. On the flip, minimal assistance frequently coincided with heightened challenges in managing everyday responsibilities tied to raising children facing developmental hurdles. Patterns within the information appeared consistent to an extent where chance alone appears unlikely. For this reason, the belief that perceived support has no impact on caregiver stress becomes less convincing. Typically, individuals sensing backing express lower levels of strain related to child-rearing duties.

### DISCUSSION

This study examined whether feeling socially supported affects stress levels in parents caring for kids with developmental delays. Raising these children typically demands ongoing effort - emotionally, physically, one that stretches daily life thin. When responsibilities pile up, ties to family or neighbours may soften the weight. Support from others sometimes cushions what feels overwhelming. Findings revealed that higher levels of felt support linked clearly to lower reports of strain - a strong inverse pattern emerged, notable at the 0.01 threshold ( $r = -0.719, p < 0.01$ ). It follows that less strain on parents often goes hand in hand with stronger feelings of social backing. Handling daily care demands might become more manageable if emotional ties exist, practical help is present, therefore mental well-being improves. Parents raising kids with developmental challenges could experience greater fatigue, tension, isolation - especially where aid falls short. Stress models suggest outside support softens life pressures by offering stability during tough times. Still, connection between support and reduced struggle doesn't mean it acts alone; income pressure, how intense a child's needs are, access to resources, personal resilience styles also shape each parent's journey. So, although feeling supported matters greatly for easing stress, multiple overlapping elements ultimately define how heavy the overall responsibility feels.

### Summary

This research examined how perceived social support relates to parenting strain when children have developmental challenges. Parents often encounter intense emotional, practical, and social demands under such conditions - these can deepen stress and increase responsibility load. Understanding the role of outside support becomes essential therefore.

A group of 150 mothers and fathers took part in the research. When it came to measuring perceived demands of parenting and available assistance, established scales were applied. Summaries of responses appeared through basic statistical descriptions. Following that, a method called Pearson correlation examined how those two aspects might relate.

With an average score of 62.27 and a variation level of 18.124, parental load among participants appeared notably spread across responses. Perceived social support registered lower on average at 2.57, showing greater variability with a standard deviation of 1.265. A marked inverse pattern emerged when examining both measures together. Despite differing scales, their relationship revealed high intensity through statistical evaluation. This link held

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firm under rigorous testing - Pearson's method confirmed it clearly beneath the 0.01 threshold. As one measure increased, the other consistently declined in observable strength.

It appears that parents perceiving stronger connections around them often describe parenting as less demanding. Where support is limited, signs of emotional pressure and caregiving fatigue tend to rise. What stands out is the quiet role shared relationships play when families face the complexities tied to child development challenges.

### CONCLUSION

Among parents raising kids with developmental challenges, feeling supported socially tends to go hand in hand with less strain at home. Research indicates a substantial negative relationship between increased support from others and a discernible decrease in caregiver stress. Statistical testing revealed a strong connection ( $r = -0.719$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). The degree to which these forces move in opposition to one another is noteworthy. Not surprisingly, when networks offer more emotional or practical help, burdens tend to ease. Still, each family experiences this balance differently.

It seems clear that having people around helps parents of kids with developmental challenges feel less weighed down by daily pressures. When support shows up - not just in words but through actions - coping becomes more possible. Help from relatives, neighbours, or close friends often makes tough moments easier to move through. Carried together, weight grows lighter. Not through shows of care, yet by showing up without fanfare during uneven days. Listening matters more than speaking. Presence proves stronger than solutions ever offer.

Unexpectedly strong results pointed to social backing lowering stress for parents, which made earlier doubts about any connection fade away. Since neighbourhood help plays a key role, attention shifts toward building better networks for households guiding kids with growing challenges. Better mental well-being for parents could follow when help becomes easier to reach - through local programs, guided support, or professional talk sessions. A wider network might lighten daily burdens while strengthening personal resilience over time.

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### Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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