

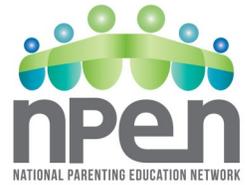


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## Research Update for Professionals

### *New Study on Helicopter Mothering!*

#### Selected Research Article:

Schiffrin, H. H., Liss, M., Miles-McLean, H., Geary, K. A., Erchull, M. J., & Tashner, T. (2014). Helping or hovering? The effects of helicopter parenting on college students' well-being. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, 23, 548-577. doi: [10.1007/s10826-013-9716-3](https://doi.org/10.1007/s10826-013-9716-3)

#### What were they trying to find out?

- Parental involvement is generally considered to have positive effects on kids, but too much of the wrong type can be detrimental.
- The authors wanted to better understand whether helicopter mothering was correlated with lower well-being of college students.

#### What did they do?

- They created a 9-item scale of **controlling involvement** (aka helicopter mothering; things like "my mother monitors my exercise schedule," and "my mother monitors who I spend time with")
- They surveyed 297 college students

#### What did they find?

"Students who reported having over-controlling parents reported significantly higher levels of depression and less satisfaction with life. Furthermore, the negative effects of helicopter parenting on college students' well-being were largely explained by the perceived violation of students' basic psychological needs for autonomy and competence" (p. 548).

#### What does it mean for parenting educators?

- We want to encourage parental involvement, but we also need to encourage parents to allow age-appropriate opportunities for kids to develop new skills and gain autonomy.
- Maternal "helping" isn't always helpful!

What topic would you like to see featured in the next C4P research update? Email your ideas to [center4parenting@utk.edu](mailto:center4parenting@utk.edu)

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