
In an 8-year prospective study of 173 girls and their families, the authors tested predictions from J. Belsky, L. Steinberg, and P. Draper's (1991) evolutionary model of individual differences in pubertal timing. This model suggests that more negative–coercive (or less positive–harmonious) family relationships in early childhood provoke earlier reproductive development in adolescence. Consistent with the model, fathers' presence in the home, more time spent by fathers in child care, greater supportiveness in the parental dyad, more father–daughter affection, and more mother–daughter affection, as assessed prior to kindergarten, each predicted later pubertal timing by daughters in 7th grade. The positive dimension of family relationships, rather than the negative dimension, accounted for these relations. In total, the quality of fathers' investment in the family emerged as the most important feature of the proximal family environment relative to daughters' pubertal timing.