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## **Sri Lankan parents’ regulation of activity of preschool aged children; A qualitative study in the Kandy District**

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**Background:** Early childhood is a period of rapid brain development that paves the way for growth of self-regulation skills. This is the perfect time for caregivers to actively teach and coach skills like decision making and problem-solving. Parental warmth, responsiveness, and sensitivity support to self-regulation development of the children.

**Objective:** The objective of the study was to explore the Sinhala speaking parents’ regulation of activity of preschool aged children in Sri Lanka.

**Method:** This qualitative data was extracted from a major mix method cross-sectional study on parenting style conducted in Kandy District in Sri Lanka. Ethical approval was obtained from the Faculty of Medicine, University of Peradeniya. A convenient sampling technique was used to approach parents of pre-school age children. Ten in-depth interviews with ten parents lasting 45 minutes and two focus group discussions with eight parents in each, lasting for two hours were conducted using a pretested interview guide. Interviews were audio-recorded with participants’ permission and transcribed and coded before drawing major themes and subthemes using thematic analysis by two independent researchers and finally achieving the consensus conclusions.

**Results:** The major themes drawn from the study were "Relationship with child", "Parent's intentional actions to disciplining", "Parental involvement in children’s education", "Integration in society" and "Parents’ regulation of activity". Twenty-eight primary codes specific to parental regulation of activity theme were classified under five subthemes: Time management, television screening, setting rules, decision making, and future expectations.

**Conclusion:** Parents play a diverse role in regulation of children’s activities. A training would help parents to understand their role in supporting self-regulation, both through the structure and content of their interactions with children as it can produce broad, substantive changes in both child self-regulation and parents’ co-regulation skills.

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