

EXPLORING THE RISK-PROTECTIVE EFFECTS OF SPECIFIC SUPPORT TYPES

**An Exploratory Study on The Effect of Different Types of Social Support in Protecting
Children from the Impact of Cumulative Risk**

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Abstract

Exposure to multiple poverty-related risk factors (i.e., cumulative risk) has been associated with poorer behavioral and emotional outcomes. Although high levels of general social support can buffer this impact, little is known about the effectiveness of different types of social support as protective factors. This is the first study exploring the protective effects of specific types of social support among children. Eight specific types of social support were examined as moderators of the association between cumulative risk and child externalizing, internalizing, and attention problems in this study. Participants were 270 caregiver-child dyads (aged 10 to 15 years, $M = 12.3$ years) from low-income families in Singapore. High levels of reliable alliance, emotional support and guidance support buffered the impact of cumulative risk on externalizing problems, internalizing problems, and attention problems. Findings suggest that some types of social support may be more effective in protecting children from the negative impact of cumulative risk. As time and resources are often limited, it is worthwhile to explore beyond the protective effects of general social support so that the most effective intervention can be provided to children.

Keywords: cumulative risk, social support, protective factors, resilience, internalizing problems, externalizing problems