

Parenting is of key importance in a child's development of emotion regulation and impulsivity control. Children with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) struggle in both of these areas, so understanding child biological regulation and how that interacts with parents' behavior can help us inform future interventions. I will be evaluating how parent emotional scaffolding interacts with child autonomic regulatory function during a challenging parent-child interaction task, and how this differs between ADHD and typically developing children. I will be transcribing parent-child interaction tasks, which involve parent-child collaboration to complete an etch-a-sketch drawing and a maze. Both parent's and child's words will be processed using the Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count (LIWC) software and the parent-child interaction coding system (PARCHISY) in order to detect positive and negative affect. I will also be analyzing the child's electrocardiogram and impedance cardiograph data during these tasks as an index for biological regulation. For this project, I have three hypotheses: (1) Parents of children with ADHD will exhibit more negative and less positive affect towards their children during the task than parents with typically developing children; (2) children with ADHD will exhibit lower levels of parasympathetic-based emotion regulation than typically developing kids; and (3) the interaction of both poor parental scaffolding and poor biological regulation will be the strongest predictor of ADHD symptom severity. There are no official parent intervention programs specifically for the parents of children diagnosed with ADHD. By better understanding how parent emotional scaffolding effects the emotional regulation of children with ADHD, we can improve parent management training programs for parents of these children.