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## From Parent to Child?

### The Long-Lasting Effects of Social Support

Ambra Poggi  
Guyonne Kalb

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# **From Parent to Child? The Long-Lasting Effects of Social Support\***

**Ambra Poggi**  
University of Milan Bicocca  
LABORatorio Revelli

**Guyonne Kalb**  
Melbourne Institute: Applied Economic & Social Research,  
The University of Melbourne  
Life Course Centre  
Institute of Labor Economics (IZA)

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**Melbourne Institute: Applied Economic & Social Research**  
The University of Melbourne  
Victoria 3010 Australia  
*Telephone* +61 3 8344 2100  
*Fax* +61 3 8344 2111  
*Email* [melb-inst@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:melb-inst@unimelb.edu.au)  
*Website* [melbourneinstitute.unimelb.edu.au](http://melbourneinstitute.unimelb.edu.au)

## **Abstract**

Social bonds and supportive relationships (social support) are widely recognised as being indispensable to healthy psychological functioning and wellbeing. Applying a multilevel approach to the 2001-2016 Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia (HILDA) data, we assess the impact of social support experienced by the parents during an individual's childhood on the individual's capacity to establish adequate social support in adult life. The level of social support experienced by the parents is measured during childhood/adolescence. Our findings show that, in addition to individual characteristics and other parental outcomes, the social support experienced by parents is an important predictor of the level of social support experienced by young adults. In particular, the mother's social support is an important predictor of the level of social support experienced by young female adults, while the father's social support is an important predictor of the level of social support experienced by young male adults. This evidence is further supported in an alternative specification based on sibling observations accounting for family fixed effects, finding that some individuals experience more social support when they are aged in their twenties than other individuals as a result of the family environment in childhood. In particular, social support experienced by parents explains about 16% of the initial family variance experienced by siblings.

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