

Family Expressivity and Social Anxiety in Children: The Potential Mediating and Moderating
Roles of Emotion Regulation

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ABSTRACT

The role of children's emotion regulation as a potential mediator or moderator in the relations between a family's emotional expressiveness and their child's social anxiety was explored in a sample of clinic-referred children. For the mediational analyses, it was predicted that emotional expressivity in families would be associated with social anxiety and that this relationship would be mediated by emotion regulation. For the moderator analyses, it was predicted that the level of emotion regulation would affect the strength of the relationship between emotional expressivity in families and social anxiety. The hypotheses were explored through hierarchical regression analyses. Family expressivity was marginally related to social anxiety. However, exploratory analyses indicated that emotion regulation failed to mediate or moderate this marginal relationship. Interestingly, mother reports of expressivity were related negatively to social anxiety whereas father reports of expressivity were related positively to social anxiety in their offspring. These findings are discussed and their implications are explored.