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## **A study on only child at Palakarai house holds area, with special reference to Tiruchirappalli district, Tamilnadu state**

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### **Abstract**

The term only child is generally applied only to those individuals who have never had siblings. An only child, however, may have half-siblings or stepsiblings who come along considerably late and still be considered an only child. Children with much older or younger siblings may also have a similar family environment to only children. Only children are sometimes said to be more likely to develop precocious interests and to feel lonely. Sometimes they compensate for the aloneness by developing a stronger relationship with themselves or developing an active fantasy life that includes imaginary friends. Children whose only siblings are much older than them sometimes report feeling like an only child. Advantages cited of having an only child are that there is no sibling rivalry and that it becomes possible to take the child to an event suitable for their age without having to bring along a disinterested sibling. A disadvantage is that it can be harder for an only child to singlehandedly look after their aging parents.

**Keywords:** Only child, behavior problems, socialization

### **Introduction**

Fifty years ago, when only children represented just 10 percent of all kids under age 18, "onlies" were often thought of as lonely, spoiled, and socially inept. But the tide has turned, and as the number of only children climbs, their place in society has risen. Today there are some 14 million only children in America, representing about 20 percent of all kids, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

A small family differs dramatically from a large one and, consequently, comes with an entirely different set of challenges and rewards. Read the following pages for some strategic guidelines to parenting an only child.

When you have more than one child, you tend to notice the differences between the children in personality and mannerisms. They can be very different from one another, even though they have the same set of parents raising them.

When a child has no siblings, there are some very special only child characteristics that develop. For one, an only child does not need to give up their share of the attention from mom and dad to a new baby. Read on to see more personality traits of an only child.

### **Only child characteristics**

Families with only one child have been growing from about 1960. This is probably because of increased living costs, personal choice and women conceiving at an older age. There tends to be a stigma with only children and people tend to give a negative response to describe only children. The popular thought is that only children are "spoiled." However, experts do report that only children do have some very positive personality traits.

### **1. Confidence and Self-Esteem**

There is evidence that children without any siblings tend to have a higher sense of self-esteem than in families with more than one child. It may look like spoiling to some, but the copious amounts of attention only children receive actually help them to feel better about themselves. When they do not have to share their parent's, they develop a very strong sense of self-esteem.

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## **2. Sense of Privacy**

When a child does not have to share his or her room with another child, they often have a higher sense of privacy. They tend to be more private than other kids with siblings and they require more privacy and personal space. It doesn't mean they are spoiled and unable to share, they just need more space.

## **3. Higher Academic Achievement**

Studies do not show proof of children without siblings being any smarter than families with multiple children. However, only children show more strength when it comes to high levels of achievement. One theory supports that parents with only one child spend more time and money on education since they don't have to split up their time between children. On the parent's side of this, they tend to expect more out of an only child education wise. Only children show higher testing scores and a higher rate of college admission.

## **4. Independent**

Only children show a higher level of independence since they do not have siblings to become co-dependent on. While it is recommended that they receive adequate socialization by attending play dates, they still tend to be more independent. Only children learn how to be by themselves and self-entertain. They do keep lots of friends, but also enjoy their time alone.

## **5. More Organized**

Only children show more attention to the details and organizing their things. They are often "on-time" and have strong life skills. So long as parents do not coddle or do too much for them, they will learn about life very quickly and model the adult behavior.

## **6. Possible Negative Only Child Characteristics**

An only child can show some negative traits like having a hard time with sharing their things. Even when they are not in a competitive situation, they always like to be the first chosen. You may notice an only child will be overly sensitive, have a hard time with criticism and be somewhat demanding. This may carry on into adulthood.

**What should parents do?** While an only child may have negative traits in their personality, parents can help them along by socializing their child and teaching them skills like sharing, teamwork and coping skills. This helps to increase the positive personality traits and minimize the negative ones. It is important that families with an only child not spoil them and help them learn to think of others and take responsibility for their actions and themselves.

## **7. Socializing in Only Child**

Only children tend prefer being alone. This may not be healthy for them and isolation may prevent them from developing social skills. They may have a harder time developing interpersonal relationships and carry this into adulthood. Allowing an only child to socialize and interact with other kids will help them develop social skills and connections with other people.

## **How to parent your only child**

### **1. Let Your Child Be an Individual**

You may tend to see your child as an extension of yourself. It is important to allow only children to find themselves and

their own sense of individuality. You may be tempted to push your child to do the things you always wanted to do, but they need to find the things they like and want to do.

### **2. Use the Word "No" (If Needed) and Be Firm**

Your child may ask you for things often and not only do you get overwhelmed as a parent; it overwhelms your child too. Learn to help them stay focused by saying "no" to things once in a while. You don't really need to give the dog a bath, go to the library, and wash the car and do homework all in one day.

### **3. Teach Them Freedom without Living By a List of Extreme Schedule**

An only child can become dependent on lists and schedules. While these things are good for a child, when it is too extreme your child will start to feel stressed and pressured. They do need to be on-time and ready for school, but they can be more casual about other things like dance class, parties and play dates.

### **4. Have Fun and Laugh**

Show them that laughter is good for them. An only child can be very serious and logical. You as a parent can show them how to lighten up and have fun!

### **5. Try Not to Interfere or Fix Things**

If they don't clean their room perfectly, make a mistake on homework or have a fight with a friend, keep a respectful distance. This means letting them clean their room their way, make mistakes and resolve their own issues.

### **6. Keep Them from Getting Lonely**

Lonely children can be sad children or develop "imaginary friends." To prevent this, get them involved in social groups like scouts, sports or classes where they can make friends.

### **7. Don't Let Him Have a Big Ego**

If your child begins to become critical of others, refuses to share and wants to be the "king of the hill", nip it in the bud as soon as possible. This is where you need to discipline and explain to your child that it is important to think of others.

### **8. Help Your Child Learn to Handle Disappointment**

An only child feels the need to be "perfect" sometimes. If they don't get chosen for the school play, get a bad grade or their teams loses a game, teach them to handle the disappointment and tell them they did their best.

### **9. Help Them Relax**

You may have them in after school sports, chess club and extra homework or reading. While these are all good, too many things going on may exhaust them but they will keep up to please you. Help your child relax by spending a quiet day doing nothing once in a while.

### **10. Allow Them to Make Mistakes**

You may spend a great amount of time with your child teaching them life skills, but once in a while take a step back. Let them make mistakes and figure out how to fix issues on their own. They have no siblings to learn from, so they need to master some skills on their own.

### **Reasons why being an only child is the best**

**1. You never had to share stuff.** What outfit to put your American Girl doll in next? Always your choice!

**2. But because you were never forced into it, you actually liked sharing and are actually a better sharer than most people.** Of course you can borrow that dress! Here, try half my cheesecake!

**3. You never had to compete for your parents' attention.**

**4. You always had your own room.** And it could be as messy or clean as you wanted it to be.

**5. However, that also meant that having roommates in college (and their closets) was extra fun.** It took some getting used to doing stuff by the light of your laptop when your roommate went to bed early, but it was such a fun experience to have a roommate that you didn't really mind.

**6. You've always been good at talking to strangers and making friends.** If you wanted playmates at the park/beach/pool as a child, you had to find them yourself, and you're still really good at this with grownup settings like work/a bar.

**7. You're comfortable talking to people older than you,** because you were always around so many adults growing up. You probably have a lot of friends who are older than you now too.

**8. You're not spoiled at all because your parents went out of their way to avoid that stereotype.** No Barbie Jeep for you.

**9. Your best friend is your sister in all but blood.** If your parents don't see her often enough, they start bugging you about how they miss her.

**10. Family vacations are awesome.** As a kid, your parents probably went on vacation with another family, so you'd have a playmate. As a teenager, you got to bring a friend with you on vacations so you had someone to hang out with. (It's like getting to choose your sibling!) As an adult, you get to take trips to fun/exotic/worldwide vacations with your parents, because it's a small group.

**11. You're extra responsible,** because you had no one to blame stuff on growing up.

**12. You never had to worry about anybody eating your entire favorite snack before you got any.** Except maybe your dad, but thankfully you can guilt him with puppy-dog eyes.

**13. You always had full control of the movie choice because you were the only one watching.**

**14. You have all the best qualities of an introvert and an extrovert.** While you're great at talking to people, you are also more than happy to spend a full day completely solo and quiet.

### **Tips for parents: having an only child**

Only children are one of the fastest growing segments of our population. Couples are waiting longer to have a child, and many have concerns about the economy, natural resources, and kids living in poverty that make them decide not to have more than one. When children are the only child in the family, they experience certain benefits and drawbacks that kids in multi-child families don't. If you have an only child, here are a few Tips for Parents you should keep in mind:

#### **Help your child understand their importance in the world**

Single children often receive a large amount of attention from their parents. This can be a wonderful thing that assists children in developing self esteem and succeeding in school. Sometimes, however, some children:

- Develop the idea that they are the most important person in the world
- Fail to learn how to act independently
- Believe they have the same rights as an adult

Help your child avoid these pitfalls by giving them a reasonable amount of loving attention, and by refusing to let them dictate all of your time. Let them know that while you love them and love spending time with them, you must also give your job, household, spouse, family and friends your time. Allow your child to spend time at friends' houses and to participate in group activities in addition to school to help reinforce this concept. You can encourage your child's independence by assigning them chores and requiring them to play on their own regularly. And while a child should have some say in decisions that affect them, remember—you are the adult. Help your child develop an identity as a child, not as a grown up.

#### **Learning Social Skills**

Only children have a great opportunity to learn how to relate to adults early on, and that can help a child mature more quickly—at least in some areas. This is great, but it is important that kids have time to enjoy their childhood years before feeling pressured to behave as an adult. It is also important for only children to learn how to relate to other children. If an only child doesn't participate in a variety of activities with other kids from the time they are toddlers, they may become shy, uninterested, or even anti-social with them.

Parents of only children may tend to be overprotective especially if they have lost a

Child previously or are unable to conceive future offspring. Only children like firstborns may tend to act older than their age which may be due in part to the fact that they spend a great deal of time in the company of adults. Many only children may even prefer to be around adults rather than be in the company of other children their own age. Being an only child myself, I can honestly say that as a child I felt more comfortable around adults than I did other children. This isn't to say that only children do not get along well with other children; the relationship of an only child to other children is normally the same as it would be for children that grow up with siblings. Each child is different whether an only child or a child of a large family.

An only child may also grow up to be a perfectionist since parents often tend to set expectations high for only children and firstborns. They are usually given more responsibility

and may tend to become emotionally mature at a younger age. Since they normally have their belongings all to themselves some only children may have some difficulty with sharing and may not like others touching items that belong exclusively to them. But once again, each child is different. It is a common misconception that only children are selfish and do not like to share. This may be true for some only children but the same can be said for other children as well. Often, two siblings of the same parents are described as being as different as night and day. Some only children may be even more willing to share their toys or other belongings because they welcome the opportunity to do so. Since they don't normally have other children to share with they may be more willing to share when the opportunity arises.

### 10 benefits of having an only child

1. I Have More One-On-One Time With My Kid:
2. Less Chaos Equals a Calmer Mom
3. I Have More Free Time
4. It's Easier On The Wallet
5. More Resources Means More Opportunities
6. My Child Knows How to Play By Himself
7. He'll Never Land in Therapy over Sibling Rivalry
8. The Odds Are In My Favor
9. knowing I'll Only Do It Once Puts Everything in Perspective
10. My Kid Is Just Fine

Newman, 2001 Only-child families are becoming increasingly common in the United States, partly because of financial limitations as well as because of the trend for couples to both marry and begin families at a relatively later age.

Roberts & Blanton, 2001 despite growing trends toward having just one child and the large body of evidence revealing the strengths of the only child, negative stereotypes about only children persist. It is commonly believed that only children are spoiled, selfish, lonely, and maladjusted

### Objectives of the study

- To study on socio-demographic details of the respondent.
- To know the behavior and attitude of the respondent.
- To analyze the psycho social problems of the respondent.
- To understand the opinion of parental care among the respondents.

### Universe and sampling

Universe of the study constitute are psycho social conditions of the single child in Palakkara area, Trichy. As there 50 house hold were selected for the researcher includes which the children's behavior, depression, passiveness, attitudes changes, and understanding, adjust mental problems. The house hold was identified under snow ball sampling method to collect the data.

### Tools of data collection

The researcher collected the data through self prepared questions. Interview schedule which was framed to elicit necessary data. The interview schedule elaborately covered with the various aspects like children attitudes, speech

levels, health conditions, education level, childless behavior activities and life styles of the respondents.

### Findings

- Less than (47%) half of the respondent says that the age based on 17<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup>
- Majority of the respondents (67%) says that the sex of the based on says on female
- Cent(100%) percentage of the respondent says that the areas based on Trichy districts
- Less than (37%) half of the respondent says that the reason for single child is based on only their parents interest
- Less than (47%) half of the respondent says that family status will be middle class.
- The less than (60%) majority of the respondents says that types of the family is based on nuclear family
- Less than (70%) majority of the respondent says that educational status based on 10<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup>
- Less than (60%) majority of the respondent says that parents fulfill your likes based on the spot,
- Less than (41%) half of the respondent says that feelings reason for single child based on other people tell you.
- Majority of the respondent (64%) says that any other physical problem in your parents based on no
- Majority of the respondent (67%) says that the think about birth with sibling based on yes.
- Less than half of the respondent (47%) says on who share with your problem based on friends.
- Vast majority of the respondent (80%) says that house have defense for you based on yes
- Vast majority of the respondent (78%) says that maximum affection of child based on father and mother.
- Majority of the respondent (64%) says that working parents based on father and mother.
- Majority of the respondent (60%) says that live your house loneliness based book reading.
- Majority of the respondent (67%) says that relatives are come to our home based on some time.
- Half of the respondent (50%) says that the single child in your family or dislike based on dislike.
- Vast majority of the respondent (73%) says that type of relation affection with you based on mother relation.
- Majority of the respondent (63%) says that family members when you deal with you based on average.
- Majority of the respondent (67%) says that the parents go out with any outing based on some time.
- Vast majority of the respondents (77%) says that the like on sisters or brothers based on yes.
- Vast majority of the respondents (73%) says that the stray on studying based on parents.
- Less than half of the respondent (43%) says that the child any other dislike behavior based on says on disadjustment.
- Less than (40%) half of the respondents say that the how many time spending who are person based on parents.
- Vast majority of the respondent (87%) says that affected on sexual harassment based on yes.

- Vast majority of the respondent (73%) says that the sharing with feeling will be other persons based on say that on yes.
- Vast majority of the respondents (70%) says that the any other mistake will be correct you parents based on says that yes.
- Less than (43%) half of the respondents says that the see other children in your feeling based on feeling.
- Less than (43%) says that the other person irritable in your reaction show that based in tension.

### **Suggestions to help parents' do the best to bring up their single child**

1. The Parent does not encourage your child to be the centre of attention at any time it can be very painful when they go out into the real world.
2. Your child be a child and don't expect them to be a little kid when they are taking decision.
3. The parent doesn't overcompensate for the lack of a sibling to the child and let them allow freely out of the home.
4. Encourage your child to join groups etc so they can interact with lots of different children with interests similar to theirs.
5. Make sure your child goes to a school with both sexes.
6. The parent don't overprotect your child or expect too much independence too early.
7. Make a big effort to let your child separate from you psychologically and this may also mean financially, as they get into their teens.
8. Ensure you do not become enmeshed with your child: – assuming their needs are the same as yours.
9. Encourage your child to take responsibility for aspects of their life and be aware that many only children feel overly responsible for their parents well being.
10. Make your child sometimes wait for things they want, or you will set up expectations of instant gratification which is hard for them to unlearn once they have relationships.
11. Teach your child how to share ... not with you ... but with other children.

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