The Effect of Paternal Parenting Stress on Child Cognitive Development at 24 Months of Age
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There is a great deal of research that investigates the association between parenting stress and child developmental outcomes. Research has found that mothers’ parenting stress has an adverse affect on child cognitive development. However, there is very little research on fathers’ stress and how it affects child developmental outcomes. We hypothesize that paternal parenting stress and paternal stress related to difficult parent-child interactions has a negative effect on child cognitive development. For this study, data were collected from the Early Head Start Research and Evaluation Study to examine this relationship (analysis sample of 600 fathers and 600 children). The findings indicate no significant association between paternal parenting stress and child cognitive development. However, paternal parenting stress related to difficult father-child interactions has a negative impact on child cognitive development. Also, the impact of fathers’ stress is greater for sons’ cognitive development than daughters’ cognitive development. The clinical implications for observing father-son interactions and developing coping strategies for parenting stress are discussed.