Emotional regulation is the capacity to manage emotion, and is influenced by situations, people, and the child’s specific goals for regulating emotion in specific situations (Thompson & Calkins, 1996). Two possible influences are the education level of the child’s mother and the quality of parent-infant interactions.

**Purpose:**

The purpose of this project is to assess the association between the maternal education level and infants’ emotional regulation skills, and to see how this association is mediated by parent-infant interaction quality.

**Methods:**

Sample: Extant longitudinal data on a sample of n = 1,984 infants and their families from the U.S. Early Head Start Research & Evaluation Project were used for this project.

**Measures:**

- The Parenting Interactions with Children: Checklist of Observations Linked to Outcomes (PICCOLO; Roggman et al., 2013) was used to assess parent interaction quality.
  - Measures parent-interaction across four domain types: Affection, Responsiveness, Encouragement, and Teaching.

- The Emotional Regulation subscale of the Bayley Behavioral Rating Scales (BRS; Bayley, 1993) was used to measure child behavior during a difficult task at 36 months.

**Results:**

- Table 1: Bivariate correlations show significant positive associations between maternal education, parent-infant interaction quality, and emotional regulation at 36 months. *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001

- Figure 1: Results from the mediation model indicated that interaction quality mediates the association between maternal education and infants’ emotional regulation. This was supported by a Sobel test which indicated that parenting is a significant mediator.

**Conclusion:**

- These results suggest that mothers with higher levels of education interact with their infants in more developmentally supportive ways than mothers with lower levels of education.
- This then affects infants’ ability to regulate their emotions as they grow up.