

Mothers nurture emotions in girls over boys, new study finds

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A new study published today in *The British Journal of Developmental Psychology* has found that conversations mothers have with their

daughters tend to contain more emotional words and content, than the conversations they have with their sons.

The researchers from the University of Surrey also found that as [mothers](#) use more emotional words than fathers, they are also unconsciously reinforcing gender stereotypes to their children.

They suggest that these findings could explain why women are generally more emotionally intelligent than men.

65 Spanish mothers and fathers and their four and six year-old children took part in a storytelling task and a [conversation](#) about past experiences for the study. Researchers examined their use of language and the number of words associated with emotion. Daughters were found to display a higher level of emotional literacy than boys with [words](#) such as 'happy', 'sad' and 'worried' used frequently.

"Our study suggests that parent-child conversations are gendered, with mothers talking more expressively to their daughters than their sons," said lead author Dr Harriet Tenenbaum from the University of Surrey.

"This inevitably leads to girls growing up more attuned to their emotions than boys. Having this edge to be more expressive and cope well with emotions may matter more than ever in the workplace, as more companies are starting to recognise the advantages of high emotional intelligence when it comes to positions such as sales, teams and leadership."

Provided by University of Surrey

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