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Social Inhibition in Preschool Children: Causes and Coping Strategies

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ABSTRACT In the present study, preschool children were assessed for socially inhibited behaviour. Causes of social inhibition and maternal coping strategies were also explored. Forty-five preschool children, their mothers, and class teachers participated in the present study. An inventory was prepared for the assessment of social inhibition in children. Mothers and class teachers were requested to rate the frequency of social inhibition in children on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (*never*) to 5 (*always*). Mothers were also requested to provide information on the causes and coping strategies for inhibited behavior. On the basis of obtained mean score, children were divided into three categories: below average, average and above average for social inhibition. Results revealed that 13.3 per cent children were identified as extremely socially inhibited. Majority of mothers believed that social inhibition or shyness was a basic human nature. To cope with inhibited behavior of children, most of the mothers encouraged children to make friends and to interact with others. Mothers also reported using verbal reprimand to direct appropriate behavior as one of the strategy. Girls were more inhibited/shy than boys. Findings of the present study have important implications for parents and care givers at home and educational context.