

# Overparenting is driven by undervaluing learning opportunities & underestimating children's abilities



#2247807: Over-engaged parenting and science achievement in early childhood

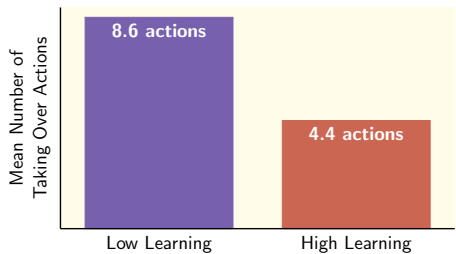
## Parents take over more when they think ...

... children aren't learning a lot from the process

which is more common on practical (vs. academic) tasks



Reframing tasks as learning opportunities reduces taking over by 50%

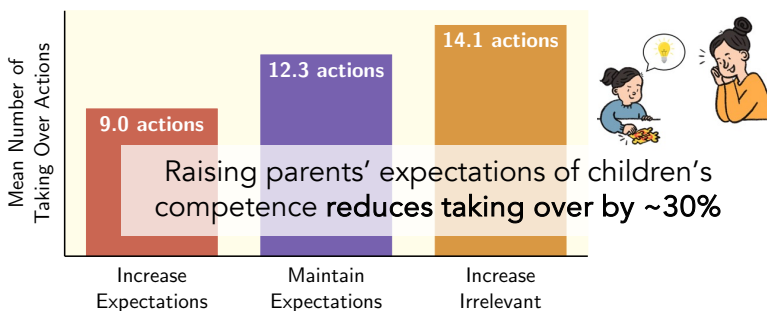


↑ Take over  
↓ Learning

↓ Take over  
↑ Learning

... children are not capable

and parents consistently underestimate preschoolers



Raising parents' expectations of children's competence reduces taking over by ~30%

Parents underestimate preschooler's abilities on 43% of tasks!

Underestimation is especially common on:

Practical tasks



Novel tasks



## Methods

Experimental

Dyads

- Parents filled out surveys about their beliefs
- Dyads participated in experimental studies at children's museums
- Used cover stories to manipulate parent beliefs; watched dyadic interaction on developmentally appropriate tasks

## Stay tuned for...

Longitudinal

- Peer effects on overparenting (Wang, Shachnai, Leonard, 2025)
- Children's beliefs about overparenting
- Physiological underpinnings of overparenting
- Long-term effects of overparenting on children's STEM persistence and achievement

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Shachnai, R., Asaba, M., Hu, L., & Leonard, J.A. (2025). Pointing out learning opportunities reduces overparenting. *Child Development*. DOI: 10.1111/cdev.14198

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Shachnai, R., Belluck, A., & Leonard, J.A. (2025). Parents underestimate young children's abilities which may undermine their parenting practices. *Proceedings of the 47th Annual Conference of the Cognitive Science Society*

