



**DOCTORATE IN CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY**

**Major Research Project**

**The Association Between Observed Maternal Sensitivity to Non-distress and Child Temperament**

**Trainee Name:** Laura Dixie

**Supervisors:** Dr Carol Joinson, University of Bristol  
Dr Phil Yates, University of Exeter

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**DECLARATION:**

“I certify that all material in this literature review which is not my own work has been identified and properly attributed. I have conducted the work in line with the BPS DCP Professional Practice Guidelines.”

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF REQUIREMENTS FOR THE  
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## Abstract<sup>1</sup>

The relationship between maternal sensitivity (MS) and child outcomes has been examined by earlier research. There is some evidence that MS plays a role in shaping temperament development in early childhood. Child temperament outcomes are a significant predictor for functioning in later life. The study is based on 952 mother-infant pairs from the Avon Longitudinal Study of Parents and Children (ALSPAC). MS was observed at 12-months and temperament at 24-months. Linear regression was used to investigate the association between MS and temperament, adjusting for a range of confounders (temperament at 6 months, gender, SES, maternal mental health, maternal preconceptions of her child, parental conflict, gestation and maternal age). Multiple imputation was used to account for attrition. Mother-child interactions rated as “cool/moderate” were associated with more difficult temperament on the dimensions of “approach” (Coef 0.35, CI 0.09, 0.60), “rhythmicity” (Coef 0.43, CI 0.19, 0.68) and “adaptability” (Coef 0.24, CI 0.00, 0.49). The associations remained after adjusting for confounders in the imputed data set. There is evidence that maternal warmth may be influential in the development of child temperament, particularly positive affect, sociability and affect regulation. Further research is needed to replicate these findings.

**KEYWORDS** Maternal Sensitivity, Temperament, Child Development, Maternal Warmth, Maternal Responsiveness.

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<sup>1</sup>This literature review is formatted according to the nominated journal, Psychological review. Instructions to authors are included in Appendix B2.

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