

Background/Purpose

- Effortful control (EFC) contributes to the regulation of emotion and behavior (1, 2) and begins to emerge during the early toddler period (3).
- Several studies suggest some continuity between early regulatory capacity and later EFC (4, 5).
- Although two studies have examined the contributions of parent EFC to parenting and child EFC (6, 7), these studies used toddlers or older children.
 - For example, Spinrad et al. (6), found that the effects of sensitive/warm parenting on social competence were mediated by effects of parenting on child EFC.
- Studies accounting for effects of parent EFC on parenting and child EFC (direct and indirect effects) are important given the importance of parent characteristics, such as EFC, for emotion-related parenting practices (7).
- Few studies have jointly examined infant temperament and environmental precursors to toddler EFC.
- No studies were identified that simultaneously considered the trajectory of early regulatory capacity, maternal EFC, parenting of infants, on subsequent toddler EFC.

Hypotheses

- High maternal EFC would be associated with higher slopes and intercepts of infant Regulatory Capacity
- High maternal EFC would predict higher toddler EFC
- Higher maternal EFC would predict more maternal time spent in interactive caregiving activities with infants
- Higher slope and intercept of infant regulatory capacity would uniquely contribute to higher toddler EFC
- Greater maternal time spent in interactions with infants would predict higher slopes of infant regulatory capacity and better toddler EFC

Hypotheses - Continued

- Given our previous finding regarding the influence of infant negative emotion on trajectories of infant regulatory capacity (8), infant NE was included in the model
- Better maternal EFC was expected to have negative associations with infant NE; infant NE was expected to be negatively related to maternal time spent in infant care and subsequent toddler EFC

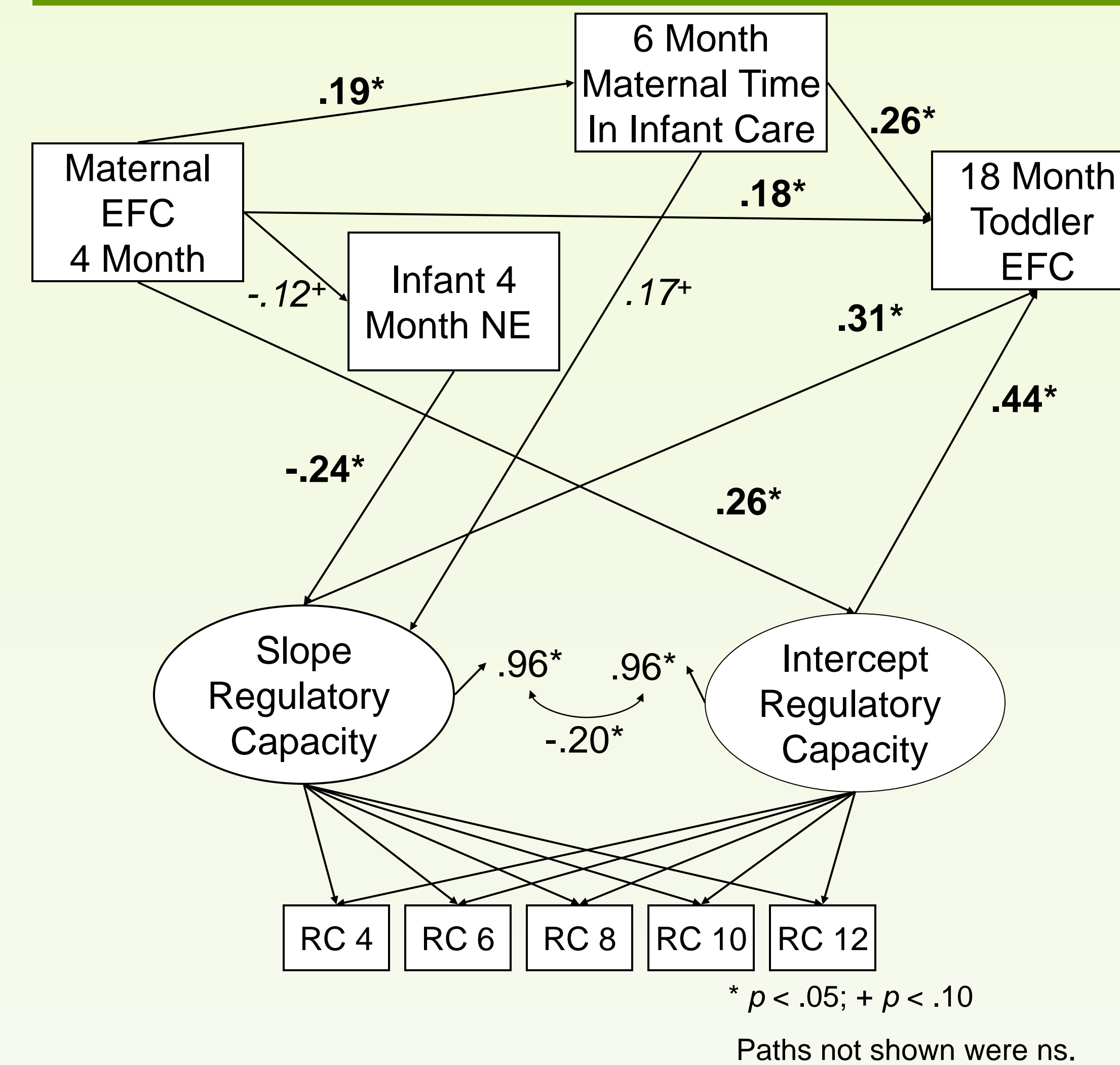
Participants

- 156 families with 4 month old infants
- Primarily Caucasian (92.4%)
- Wide SES range (Income-to-needs range = .334 – 7.952)
- Mothers' mean age = 30.31 (range 20.00 – 40.00)
- Mothers' mean years of education = 15.17 (range 10.00 – 25.00)

Measures and Procedure

- Infant Behavior Questionnaire – Revised (9): Orienting/Regulation factor
 - Completed at 4, 6, 8, 10, and 12 months of age
- Early Childhood Behavior Questionnaire (10): Effortful Control factor
 - Completed at 18 months of age
- Adult Temperament Questionnaire (11): Effortful Control factor
 - Completed at 4 months of age
- Caregiving Questionnaire – mother estimate of time spent daily with their infants in activities such as reading, playing, bathing, holding, feeding, and dressing
 - Completed at 6 months of age

Results



- The latent growth model fit the data well
- $\chi^2(23) = 27.21, p < .05, CFI = 1.00, GFI = .92, AIC = -18.79, RMSEA = .03$
- A total of 42.6% of the variance in toddler EFC was accounted for by infant and maternal variables

Discussion

- Findings largely conformed to expectations, with one notable exception: Maternal EFC did not predict the slope of infant Regulatory Capacity/Orienting
- Results indicate that considering the trajectory of infant regulatory capacity adds unique variance to the prediction of future EFC, extending existing studies examining the continuity of infant regulatory capacity and later EFC.

Discussion - Continued

- After accounting for maternal EFC, the time maternal caregivers reported spending in various interactive caregiving activities with infants at 6 months was a significant contributor to toddler EFC 12 months later
- While prior studies have used constructs such as maternal warmth and sensitivity, the current study used maternal time spent in various interactive caregiving activities and obtained similar results, suggesting that quantity, in addition to quality, of maternal-child interactions may be important. Infants who spend more time interacting with caregivers may have more opportunities to use regulation skills, ultimately resulting in better behavioral and emotional regulation.
- Future studies should consider incorporating several different sources of information regarding infant regulatory capacity and/or toddler EFC and use a diary method to obtain estimates of time maternal caregivers spend in activities with their child.

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- Poster Presented at the March 2010 Biennial Meeting of ICIS
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- To download a copy of the poster, visit the Emotion Regulation & Temperament Lab's Website at www.niu.edu/emotionreg