

Where do good parents come from and does it matter?

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Parental care is a form of post-copulatory investment of time and energy made by a parent to ensure the successful development of its offspring, but this investment of time and energy into care may actually reduce future reproduction and / or longevity. Each parent therefore must carefully balance the costs and benefits associated with the amount of parental care provided. We investigated in the burying beetle *Nicrophorus vespilloides* whether males and females provide different levels of care when rearing offspring alone, and whether parental care has a genetic basis. We divided same age siblings among two broods, one of which was reared by the mother and the other by the father, and monitored survival of the broods, offspring development time and mass at dispersal, and amount of parental care provided. The offspring were then also monitored for amount of parental care they provided to their offspring. We examined parental care under carefully controlled environmental conditions to determine whether variation in care had a genetic basis, with a significant heritability. Here we present data showing how variation in parental care influences offspring growth and development.