## Sample background and selection

Four hundred children were recruited from the National Evaluation of Sure Start’s (NESS) cross-sectional study of 150 communities across England, which originally saw children at age 3 years (Belsky, Melhuish, Barnes, Leyland & Romaniuk, 2006). We followed up children who were living in the South (including Greater London, Berkshire, Oxfordshire and Suffolk) or the North of England (including Manchester, Lancashire and Yorkshire) at 3 years and who were 8 to 10 years old in Jan 2009 (Total sample pool: n = 1,183). Home visits took approximately 4 hours*.* We asked parents’ permission to contact children’s teachers about their behaviour.Sure Start Local Programme (SSLP) effects involving the children to be recruited were limited in number and small in magnitude (Belsky et al., 2006). Families were compensated with up to £35 in department store vouchers and teachers with £10 in the same vouchers. Data collection started in August 2009 and took two and a half years to complete, with approximately 5 visits taking place per week and a total of number of 400 completed visits.

Children were recruited based on their experiences of harsh, non-supportive parenting at age 3**.** *Harsh discipline* was measured with 8 items from the Parent-Child Conflict Tactics Scale (Straus, Hamby, Finkelhor, Moore & Runyan, 1998)that asked parents how often in the past year they used verbally or physically harsh disciplinary techniques (e.g., shouting, yelling or screaming; slapping or smacking; alpha=.77). Each question was rated on an 8-point scale: ‘Never’; ‘once’; ‘twice’; ‘3-5 times’; ‘6-10 times’; ‘11-20 times’; ‘more than 20 times’; ‘not in past year but before’. As part of the Home Observation for Measurement of the Environment (HOME; Caldwell & Bradley, 1984), which reflects observer ratings of parent-child interaction, research workers also observed whether parents engaged in three verbally or physically punitive behaviours as part of the Acceptance subscale. These items were reversed (parent scolded child at least twice in front of interviewer, parent smacked or slapped child during visit, parent physically restrained child) and summed. Each subscale was then standardized before the two standardized scores were averaged together. The harsh discipline scale score was approximately normally distributed; this variable was then divided into terciles.

*Supportive parenting* was assessed using the eight questions on the Responsive Parenting subscale from the HOME (e.g., mother showed affection to child at least once during visit; mother usually responded verbally to child talking). Each item was coded as either observed or not observed. Because scores on the Supportive Parenting variable were heavily positively skewed, a median split was performed to dichotomize this variable.

### Summary:

*Harsh parenting*: The HOME Acceptance subscale was reversed and standardized; Harsh discipline (from CTS-PC) was standardized. These standardized scales were averaged together and then trichotomized (‘zharsh3grp’) to form the harsh parenting variable.

*Supportive parenting*: A median split on HOME Responsivity subscale was carried out to form the supportive parenting variable (‘respmed’).

*Sample group selection*: High risk families were identified if they were in the top tercile of the harsh parenting variable and the bottom half of the responsivity/supportive parenting variable. The Low risk group comprised those in the bottom tercile of the harsh discipline variable and the top half of the responsivity variable. Medium risk families were selected were in the middle tercile of the harsh discipline variable regardless of their score on the HOME responsivity subscale. The Medium and Low Risk families are combined for analyses.

### References:

Belsky J, Melhuish E, Barnes J, Leyland AH, Romaniuk H, (2006) National Evaluation of Sure Start Research Team *Br Med J* 332: 1476-1481.

Caldwell, B. & Bradley, R. H. (1984) *Home Observation for Measurement of the Environment* (University of Arkansas at Little Rock, Little Rock, AR).

Straus, M. A., Hamby, S. L., Finkelhor, D., Moore, D. W. & Runyan, D. (1998). Identification of Child Maltreatment With the Parent-Child Conflict Tactics Scales: Development and Psychometric Data for a National Sample of American Parents. *Child Abuse Neglect* 22: 249-270.