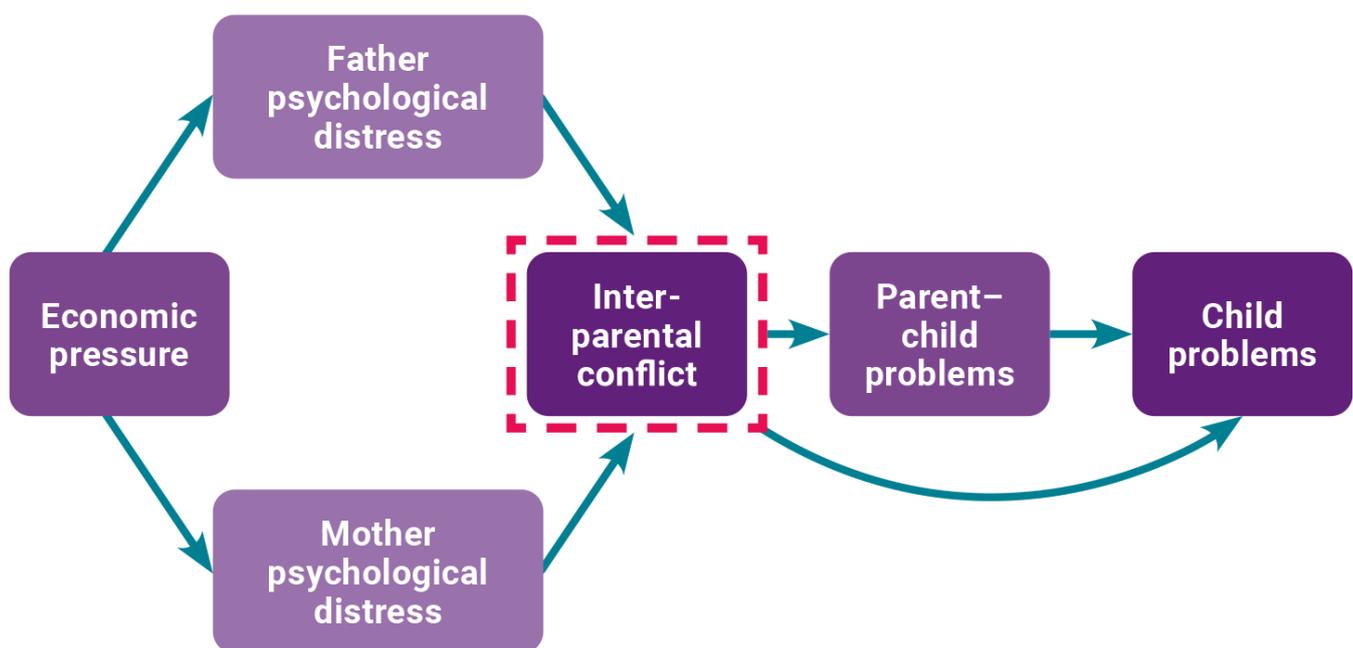


Family stress model

The family stress model shows how poverty and economic pressure affects the quality of interparental relationships, which in turn impacts on child outcomes. Longitudinal evidence shows that poverty or economic pressure impacts on parents' mental health, which can cause parental conflict and difficulties with parenting. These then negatively impact on child outcomes and their future life chances, including externalising and internalising problems, academic and physical health difficulties, and social and interpersonal relationship problems.

Increasingly parental conflict is seen as the central mechanism of or a precursor to poor parenting and negative child outcomes. This means that parenting interventions in families where there are high levels of parental conflict are unlikely to be effective, unless the interparental relationship is also addressed.



There are a range of factors which are associated with resilience to parental conflict and parenting difficulties in low income families. These include maternal social support, effective coping strategies, communication and problem-solving, community and neighbourhood support.

*Poverty or negative financial events, such as job loss or health difficulties, can give rise to economic pressure. Economic pressure represents the psychological impact of financial hardship that is brought on by the daily struggles that accompany unstable economic conditions (such as being unable to pay bills or purchase basic necessities).