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Maternal Investments in Children: The Role of Expected Effort and Returns

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Abstract

We investigate the importance of subjective expectations of returns to and effort costs of the two principal investments that mothers make in newborns: breastfeeding and stimulation. We find heterogeneity across mothers in expected effort costs and expected returns for outcomes in the cognitive, socio-emotional and health domains, and that this contributes to explaining heterogeneity in investments. We find no significant differences across women in preferences for child developmental outcomes. We simulate the impact of alternative policies on investments. Our findings highlight the relevance of interventions designed to address maternal depression and reduce perinatal fatigue alongside interventions that increase perceived returns to investments.

JEL Classification: I12, I15, J24

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1 Introduction

Gaps in children's intellectual, physical, and emotional development emerge early in childhood and tend to widen over time (Cunha et al., 2006; Ermisch et al., 2012; World Bank, 2015). It is estimated that at least half of the variation across individuals in lifetime earnings arises from attributes determined by age 18 (Cunha et al., 2005; Huggett et al., 2011; Keane and Wolpin, 1997). Early childhood developmental outcomes are shaped by a combination of neurological, physiological, and environmental factors, including nutrition, stress, and the responsivity and stimulation offered by parents and other caregivers. Parents thus play a crucial role, and differences in parental behaviours are an important facet of the emergence of unequal capabilities in children (Almond and Mazumder, 2013; Lavy et al., 2016).

In the model of parental investments pioneered by Becker and Tomes (1979, 1986), heterogeneity in parental investments arises either from differences in resource constraints or from differences in parental preferences over child development. It can be difficult to modify preferences. Thus the traditional approach is to seek to ameliorate childhood inequalities through alleviation of poverty constraints, for example, through cash transfers.[1] However, the evidence that income transfers to poor families boost child outcomes is ambiguous, especially when the transfers are unconditional (Caucutt and Lochner, 2020; Heckman and Mosso, 2014). In other words, it is unclear that endowing low income parents with additional income translates into improved early childhood development.

We contribute to recent research highlighting the potential relevance of two additional constraints on parental investments – information frictions and effort costs. The Beckerian model assumes that parents have perfect information on how their investments influence child outcomes (henceforth, expected returns). We relax this assumption, allowing that parents with similar preferences and resource constraints may choose different levels of investment in their children because they have different subjective expectations (or beliefs) of the returns. If this is the case, interventions that offer information to mothers may redress early gaps in development. However, even if mothers update their beliefs about returns to their

[1]The Mexican PROGRESA is an early example of a government-led programme offering conditional cash transfers to families, with the conditionality defined on parental investments in the health and education of children. This model has been adopted in numerous countries.

investments in children, effort costs may constrain investment. Effort costs may arise, for instance, from postnatal fatigue, depression, or the cognitive load associated with poverty (Mullainathan and Shafir, 2013; Putnam, 2016), and failing to address these constraints may limit the effectiveness of a range of early childhood interventions. In a departure from existing studies of investments in children, we model effort cost directly. In doing this, we address a second limitation of traditional models of parental investments which interpret resource constraints as credit constraints, neglecting the relevance of mental and physical capacity constraints.

To investigate the role of information and effort costs, we elicit baseline data on expected returns and effort costs from a sample of more than 1,100 pregnant women in rural and peri-urban Pakistan. We measure investments when their children are three months old, focusing on exclusive breastfeeding and structured play. These are essential aspects of parenting and attachment-creation in the first months of life. Parenting and attachment have been argued to be among the most critical family-level factors influencing human capital and social mobility (Heckman and Mosso, 2014).[2]

We elicit probabilistic beliefs about investment returns in terms of child development in various domains: cognitive (language and learning well at school), socio-emotional (playing with other children), and health (diarrhea, the leading cause of death among infants and children in Pakistan). We elicit expected effort costs by asking mothers how tiring they anticipate the activities of breastfeeding and play to be.

We find that, in general women expect fairly large positive returns to their investments, but that there is substantial heterogeneity in expected returns.[3] Expected returns are increasing in education and wealth of the mother. We find no evidence that expected returns are lower among women suffering depression. Against the prior that women learn about returns to maternal investment by raising children, we see no gradient in birth order.

We find considerable variation in expected effort costs, with about a third of all pregnant

[2]Fitzsimons and Vera-Hernández (2013) identify a positive causal impact of breastfeeding on cognitive development, and several other studies have associated breastfeeding with attachment (e.g., Britton et al., 2006). Attanasio et al. (2020) identify impacts of structured play on cognitive development among toddlers.

[3]The largest returns to breastfeeding are for the child health outcome, and the largest returns to guided play are for cognitive outcomes, an indication that women understand both our questions, and the contributions of breastfeeding and play.

women expecting breastfeeding or playing with their (unborn) child to be tiring. In general, expected effort costs are more readily predicted by the characteristics of the woman than expected returns to her investments, and the gradients look plausible. Depressed women report higher anticipated effort costs, as do women with no education, women with wealth below the median level, and older women.[4] We see a positive association between expected returns and costs conditional upon mother characteristics. This underlines the importance of collecting data on expected effort costs data alongside expected returns, as it indicates that omitting costs could lead us to over-estimate the role of expected returns (Wiswall and Zafar, 2015).

Turning to the data on maternal investment in children at 3 months of age, we find that 32% breastfeed but do not guide play, 15% do not breastfeed but guide play, 36% of mothers make neither investment, and only 18% make both investments. There are clear wealth and depression gradients in the joint investments. For instance, only 11% of depressed mothers, compared with 20% of non-depressed mothers make both investments; the gradients in wealth are a bit smaller but still large.

We use the data on actual investments together with data on expected returns and costs measured before any investment is made, to estimate preference parameters for child developmental outcomes and effort costs using a discrete choice model in which mothers decide whether to breastfeed and play. Our main finding is that differences across mothers in expected returns and expected effort costs contribute to differences in maternal investments, but that differences in preferences for child developmental outcomes play a limited role.

Of particular interest, our results indicate a role for maternal depression in hampering investments in children. A mechanism consistent with our evidence is that depression raises the perceived effort cost of investment. We find no evidence that depressed women expect lower returns to investment.

We use the structural parameters to simulate impacts of alternative policies that raise expected returns or lift effort costs. In line with previous research (Cunha et al., 2013), we find that an information intervention that increases the mother's expected returns raises

[4]For example, depressed mothers are 9.7 pp and 8 pp more likely to expect that breastfeeding and playing respectively will be tiring.

both investments. We also provide the first evidence that eliminating effort costs leads to a significant increase in guided play (stimulation).[5] Increasing expected returns while at the same time lifting effort cost shows the strongest potential to foster maternal investments.[6] In an alternative simulation, we investigate the effect of treating depression by setting an indicator for whether the mother is depressed to zero, and replacing the expected returns and costs reported by depressed mothers with the averages from the non-depressed sample. This results in an increase in investment in play of 8%, consistent with our finding that depression exacerbates effort costs, and that depressed mothers exhibit lower levels of investment. Overall, our results contribute to the still scarce evidence in the literature that information interventions can raise parental investment in children, and they provide the first estimates showing that interventions that act to lighten the mental and physical load on new mothers, such as mothers groups or depression treatments, can foster child development.

In an approach similar to Cunha et al. (2013, 2020a), we descriptively associate characteristics of individuals with their subjective expectations and then investigate the extent to which their expectations influence their investments. To do this, we combine actual investment with beliefs within a simple structural model of decision-making under uncertainty, that allows us to identify preference parameters (Delavande, 2008; Manski, 2004). A potential concern that runs through this literature is the potential endogeneity of beliefs. This may bias preference parameters on account of learning (for instance, mothers who value health will engage in health investments, and thereby learn about their effectiveness and express this in higher expected returns), or ex-post rationalisation (mothers who did not engage in health investments may tend to report low expected returns so as to rationalise their actions) (Delavande and Zafar, 2019). Our design mitigates this concern in two ways. First, beliefs are elicited in pregnancy before the child is born and any investments are made. Second, the beliefs question is framed in terms of what the respondent thinks the average woman in her community expects, rather than what she expects. Still, we encourage further work that

[5]Investment in play increases by 12% (3.8 pp from a baseline of 31%) in a simulation in which effort costs are set to zero – a magnitude that happens to be the same as that which results from raising expected returns by the interquartile range of the returns distribution.

[6]It produces a large increase in play of 25% under the scenarios specified above. This combined intervention is also effective at reducing differences in investment across mothers by education, wealth and depression status.

studies impacts on investment of experimentally manipulated variation in perceived returns and costs. This was outside the scope of this study.[7]

There is now fairly strong evidence from across disciplines that breastfeeding and guided play are important for emotional, physical and cognitive development. Less widely recognized is that physical and mental fatigue among mothers of newborns can constrain these critical maternal investments. Mothers of newborns may be fatigued for biological reasons – it is estimated that it can take a mother a year or more to recuperate from the demands of pregnancy, and replenish stocks of vital nutrients (DaVanzo and Pebley, 1993). Effort costs may be elevated on account of the burdens of poverty. Recent work shows that the stress of poverty can enhance cognitive load and trigger tunnelling in decision-making (Mani et al., 2013; Schilbach et al., 2016). Mental constraints are likely to be exacerbated by perinatal depression, which is associated with stress and fatigue (Cohen et al., 1982; Den Hartog et al., 2003). As many as 12-20% of mothers in the OECD, and 20-35% in poorer countries are estimated to suffer perinatal depression. However this often goes undiagnosed and hence untreated (Gelaye et al., 2016).

We subject the data and the estimates to a number of checks. As regards the primary data we gather, we check that women understand probabilities before we elicit expected returns, and we confirm that the elicited data respect the basic properties of probabilities.[8] We show that the expected returns and cost data are well-behaved, being consistent with outcome realizations. In the baseline survey we elicited preferences directly, asking women how much they cared about each developmental outcome analysed. We show that our modelled estimates concur with the stated preference data.

As regards the analysis, we investigate sensitivity of the estimates to accounting for differences across women in time or physiological constraints (that could limit the extent to which their investments reflect their subjective expected returns) and to allowing complementarity in the perceived returns of the two investments. We further investigate sensitivity to sample restrictions, weights, alternative definitions of guided play (leveraging multiple measures in

[7]Note that experimentally varying depression is interesting but it would not independently identify the role of returns and costs because depression can influence both, see section 2.

[8]We use visual aids following the approach developed by Delavande and Kohler (2009) and reviewed in Delavande (2014).

the data), measurement error in beliefs, and within-village correlation in elicited beliefs and effort costs. Our broad conclusions are robust to these variations.

1.1 Relation to the existing literature

Following recognition of the identification problem that arises because many combinations of preferences and expectations yield the same choice (Manski, 2004; Savage, 1954), a number of recent studies combine expectations data with choice data to better understand decision-making under uncertainty (Arcidiacono et al., 2012; Attanasio and Kaufmann, 2014; Delavande, 2008; Delavande and Kohler, 2016; Delavande and Zafar, 2019; Giustinelli, 2016; Stinebrickner and Stinebrickner, 2012, 2014a, 2014b; Wiswall and Zafar, 2018).[9] With some recent exceptions discussed next, this research has not studied the role of parental expectations in determining parental investment in children.

Attanasio et al. (2019a), Attanasio et al. (2019b), Boneva and Rauh (2018), and Cunha et al. (2013, 2020a) are similar to us in eliciting beliefs about returns to parental investments but, in contrast to us, they do not elicit effort costs. Our approach also differs from these studies in eliciting perceived returns in the health, cognitive and socio-emotional domains. With the exception of Biroli et al. (2018) who investigate parental beliefs about the returns to diet and exercise among children age 5-18 in the UK, existing research has focused on cognitive, education, or earnings returns. Dizon-Ross (2019) elicits parental beliefs about the child's academic performance, rather than beliefs over the returns to investing in children.

Ours is the first analysis of effort costs of mothers in making early postnatal investments. In a broadly related manner, existing studies have shown that non-pecuniary factors or psychic costs influence (own) education decisions (Boneva and Rauh, 2019; Cunha et al., 2005; Delavande and Zafar, 2019; Eisenhauer et al., 2015; Navarro and Zhou, 2016).

A further contribution of our study is that it analyses the role of maternal subjective expectations of returns and costs in the context of child development in a low income population. It is plausible that this is where information frictions are greater and effort costs

[9] An alternative approach to the direct use of expectations data is to rely on stated choices for multiple hypothetical scenarios as in Adams-Prassl and Andrew (2019). This approach delivers the population average of beliefs vs preferences by comparing parent responses to certain vs uncertain choices. It is therefore not appropriate when one wants individual-specific expectations to associate them with choices.

higher. While there is rather more work on belief elicitation in richer countries, Attanasio et al. (2019b) elicit subjective expectations in Colombia.

Our finding that maternal depression elevates the perceived costs of playing with the infant child contributes to an emerging literature on depression and economic decision-making. In the US and Pakistani context respectively, Ronda (2016) and Baranov et al. (2020) find that depression hinders maternal investments. Both studies suggest that effort costs may be important but cannot test for this without data measuring effort cost. There is also no previous attempt to test whether depression biases beliefs over expected returns to investment.[10]

1.2 Why early infancy

Our focus on early infancy is an important feature of our study. We briefly elaborate its rationale here. The newborn child is particularly sensitive to environmental influences including nutrition and stimulation, the two investments that we analyze (Almond et al., 2018; Barker, 1990, 1995; Bateson et al., 2004). There is a biological basis for this. The velocity of physical and cognitive growth is higher in infancy than at any later period in life, which makes the child hungry for resources. Any shortfall has relatively large impacts on development because this is a life stage of considerable developmental plasticity. In a context similar to ours (Bangladesh), Hamadani et al. (2014) show that significant cognitive delays between children of different socio-economic backgrounds are apparent as early as at the age of 7 months. Once differences in initial conditions develop, they tend to be "self-productive" and to exhibit dynamic complementarity with subsequent investments, as a result of which inequalities widen with age (Cunha and Heckman, 2007). Altogether, this makes early infancy a critical period for investment (Heckman and Kautz, 2014). Our focus on early infancy also facilitates a cleaner analysis by limiting the agency of the child (the relevance of which is discussed, for instance, in Heckman and Mosso (2014)), allowing us to isolate determinants of maternal investment using data on mother's expectations of returns and effort costs.

[10]De Quidt and Haushofer (2016) formalize the notion that depression lead to downward biased beliefs about returns to own (i.e., their productivity) which, in turn, leads to lower effort. This is a different test that we do not conduct- in our setting it would require data on women's perceptions of their own productivity or self-efficacy.

The rest of this paper unfolds as follows. Section 2 sketches a model of early life investments. Section 3 describes the data collection framework. Section 4 details our measures of maternal beliefs, costs, and investments. Section 5 describes the data. Section 6 specifies the empirical model and Section 7 reviews the estimates. Section 8 carries out a series of robustness checks to assess sensitivity of the results. Section 9 provides results from alternative policy simulations targeting an increase in maternal investments in early-life. Section 10 offers concluding remarks.

2 Theoretical Framework

In this section we sketch a simple model that motivates the data collection and the empirical analysis. Our focus is on understanding maternal investment, and how it varies with beliefs about the human capital production function, expectations of own effort costs, and preferences for child human capital. Ours is a low income setting with virtually no female labor force participation, so the opportunity cost of the mother's time is not a market wage but, instead, time and energy available for household production. Expectations are elicited from a pregnancy cohort of women, during pregnancy, and the investments are measured when the child is three months old. We analyse two binary investments that are relevant at this age, exclusive breastfeeding e_{i1} and stimulation through play e_{i2}. These investments are time rather than money-intensive. The dimensions of human capital that we associate with these investments and with respect to which we elicit expected returns include preschool childhood health h_i, cognitive ability a_i, socio-emotional development s_i, and learning well at school l_i.

We allow depression to influence maternal investments through multiple channels: preferences, beliefs about the technology of human capital formation, perceived psychic costs of investment, and through tightening constraints.[11] We consider the investment decision of a mother i who has recently given birth. For simplicity, we assume that the newborn is the only (first) child in the household, but we relax this assumption in the estimation.

[11]For a discussion of the psychological foundations for these pathways, and a simple model in which the pathways we discuss are described see model below and the Appendix in Baranov et al. (2017). The model was removed from the published version of the paper, Baranov et al. (2020).

The mother is characterized by her depression status $d \in [0, 1]$. The model is similar in structure and assumptions to models in the existing literature, for instance, Cunha et al. (2013) and Attanasio et al. (2019b). The important differences that we introduce pertain to making explicit the effort and time costs of investment, allowing that maternal depression can modify these costs as well as other parameters of the model.

The mother's utility is additively separable and depends on household consumption c_i, leisure l_i and her child's human capital $\theta_{1,i}$. Child human capital is multidimensional with mean zero, and is not fully observable to the mother. She can only observe whether her child's developmental outcomes are within the normal range by virtue of their reaching relevant milestones, i.e. whether $\theta_{1,i} > \Theta$. The mother invests in the child at the level E_i, and this requires τ_{Ei} of her time.

The mother's utility is given by:

$$U_i(c_i, \theta_{1,i}, l_i, E_i) = \alpha_d ln(c_i) + v_d(l_i) + \omega_{\theta d} I(\theta_{1,i} > \Theta) - \delta_d C_{E_i} + \varepsilon_{E_i}, \tag{1}$$

where α_d is the utility value of log consumption, $v_d(l_i)$ is the utility from leisure, $\omega_{\theta d}$ is the discounted utility associated with the child's human capital being in the normal range, denoted by $I(\theta_{1,i} > \Theta)$. In terms of costs, δ_d is the marginal cost of effort while C_{E_i} is the effort or psychic cost of engaging in the investments E_i, which captures the direct disutility from the investment that may arise from physical or psychological fatigue. ε_{E_i} is a random term which is individual and investment-specific, and unobservable to the econometrician.

The human capital production function is as follows:

$$\theta_{1,i} = \mu_0 + \mu_1 \theta_{0,i} + \mu_2 E_i + \mu_i + \zeta_i, \tag{2}$$

where $\theta_{0,i}$ is the child's human capital endowment at birth, and μ_i and ζ_i denote mean-zero variables that are known and unknown, respectively, to the mother at the time the investment decision is made. μ_i captures maternal efficiency in producing child human capital, while ζ_i are unexpected shocks that influence child development, such as the onset of an illness. We assume linearity for exposition purposes but our empirical analysis does

not require this.[12]

The standard model assumes that individuals know the actual production function.[13] In light of accumulating evidence against this (see section 1), we allow that each woman acts on her individual (subjective) expectations over the parameters describing returns to her investment. The production function that she perceives is given by:

$$\theta_{1,i} = \eta_{i,0} + \eta_{i,1}\theta_{0,i} + \eta_{i,2}E_i + \mu_i + \xi_i, \tag{3}$$

where $\eta_{i,j}$ are individual-specific beliefs about the production function and ξ_i is a zero-mean variable that captures beliefs uncertainty.

Based on the beliefs from Equation (4), we can obtain the individual-specific subjective probability that a child's developmental outcomes will be within the normal range conditional on maternal investment E_i:

$$P_i(\theta_{1,i} > \Theta | E_i) = P(\xi_i > \Theta - \eta_{i,0} - \eta_{i,1}\theta_{0,i} - \eta_{i,2}E_i - \mu_i) \tag{4}$$

In a departure from the related literature, we allow that, before she undertakes the investment, the mother is also uncertain about the effort cost that it will entail, and holds expectations over these costs, denoted $\mathcal{E}_i[C_{E_i}]$. The mother's decision problem is to choose investment levels E_i that maximize her subjective expected utility

$$\mathcal{E}U_i(c_i, \theta_{1,i}, l_i, E_i) = \alpha_d ln(c_i) + v_d(l_i) + \omega_{\theta d} P_i(\theta_{1,i} > \Theta | E_i) - \delta_d \mathcal{E}_i[C_{E_i}] + \varepsilon_{E_i}, \tag{5}$$

subject to budget and time constraints, expressed as:

$c_i = y_i + wh,$

$l + h + \tau_{Ei} = T - s_d,$

where y_i denotes her non-labour earnings and h denotes the fixed time allocated to home

[12]Existing work typically assumes CES or Cobb-Douglas production function (Attanasio, 2015; Cunha et al., 2013), with some exceptions that also assume linearity (e.g., Tincani et al., 2021) in the production of test score. For our purpose, the functional form is irrelevant because we elicit directly the expectations about the child reaching development milestone. Note also that the investments in our case are discrete.

[13]A branch of the literature seeks to identify and estimate the actual production function from data on child development. Our purpose, as we discuss now, is different.

production wh, where w measures the hourly rate of home production. τ_{Ei} is the time required for investment E_i, and T is her time endowment, which can be reduced by fatigue or sick days s_d. For simplicity, the time h allocated to home production is not a choice variable. Assuming an interior solution, the mother maximizes

$$\mathcal{E}U_i(c_i, \theta_{1,i}, l_i, E_i) = \alpha_d ln(y_i + wh) + v_d(T - s_d - h - \tau_{Ei}) + \omega_{\theta d} P_i(\theta_{1,i} > \Theta | E_i) - \delta_d \mathcal{E}_i[C_{E_i}] + \varepsilon_{E_i}, \tag{6}$$

The model is rudimentary, designed to profile the decision-making process and to embed information on subjective expectations of returns and effort costs. In Section 8 we investigate whether our estimates are robust to relaxing assumptions embodied in the model.

Maternal depression, indexed $d \in [0, 1]$, is allowed to impact maternal investments through a number of channels, see Baranov et al. (2017). The first is related to *preferences*. Depression may reduce enjoyment from consumption, leisure and child developmental outcomes, anhedonia (the inability to feel pleasure) being a common symptom of depression (Pizzagalli, 2014). This is modelled as α_d, $v_d(.)$ and $\omega_{\theta d}$ being systematically different for women who are depressed, and not.

The second channel is related to *expectations about the human capital production function*. Depression may make a mother more likely to believe that a given level of investment yields a lower probability of reaching a development milestone, in which case $P_i(\theta_{1,i} > \Theta | E_i)$ is systematically lower for depressed mothers. A reason for this pessimism may be that the mother under-estimates her own capacity to move the child's developmental outcomes (De Quidt and Haushofer, 2016; MacLeod and Salaminiou, 2001). The third channel is related to the *effort costs of investment*. Depression is associated with fatigue, which can increase the psychological and physiological cost of performing simple tasks (Cohen et al., 1982; Den Hartog et al., 2003), increasing the disutility from undertaking the investments. This could reflect in depressed mothers having a higher marginal cost of effort δ_d or in a given investment requiring more units of effort C_{E_i} when the mother is depressed. Finally, depression may impact the mother's investments through *constraints*, potentially tightening constraints on disposable and energy-adjusted time through increasing fatigue or sick days s_d (Grossman,

1972).

Our survey data have the advantages of having screened all respondents for clinical depression, and having over-sampled women diagnosed as suffering perinatal depression. We do not have experimental variation in depression that can be leveraged to identify causal effects. Even if we did (as in Baranov et al. (2020)), this would not allow us to identify mechanisms – in order to identify the four different channels discussed above, we would need four instruments. We are, however, in the unique position of having primary data containing elicited measures of expectations of returns to and effort costs of investment. This allows us to illuminate two of the channels discussed above, which we explore further with policy simulations. By virtue of estimating preferences for child developmental outcomes, we are also able to illuminate any differences in preferences between women who are and are not depressed, and we find no significant differences. For the fourth channel- the time constraint- we will provide some indirect evidence indicating that depression does not intensify a woman's effective time constraint, with the caveat that we use a crude proxy for time constraints.

3 Study Design

3.1 Sample

The data were collected in 2016-2017 as part of a longitudinal study tracking a pregnancy cohort of women and their births, in rural and peri-urban Pakistan. The study is called Bachpan, which means childhood in Urdu. The research team surveyed 40 communities (clusters), identifying all women who were pregnant. Using the patient health questionnaire (PHQ-9), a clinical screen for depression, we recruited 570 women who were diagnosed as depressed and another 584 who were not, a total of 1154 pregnant women. We over-sampled depressed women.[14] Baseline data were collected when the mothers were in their third trimester of pregnancy. The investment data were gathered in a follow up survey conducted

[14]We use a binary measure of maternal depression based on the PHQ-9 following the psychometric literature. Women were classified as depressed when their score was 10 or above. See Data Appendix B.2 for details.

when the newborns were three months of age.

We describe the baseline data on expected returns and effort costs using the entire data set which, given a non-response rate of 5.6% on these questions, includes 1,090 women. Between the baseline and the 3 month follow up, a maternal depression intervention was implemented on roughly a third of all women (half of all depressed women). The intervention, cognitive behavioural therapy delivered through volunteer peers, led to a moderate effect on symptom severity and remission from perinatal depression during the 3 months after childbirth (Sikander et al., 2019). We hence exclude the intervention group in the analysis of investment behaviour, working with women who were depressed but not treated, and women who were not depressed. This is a conservative choice, designed to allow that the treatment may have impacted women's expectations of returns and effort costs, with this not being reflected in our data, which were gathered when the women were pregnant. Importantly, we investigate the sensitivity of our results to this restriction.

On account of dropping the intervention group for analysis of investments, and a 23% attrition rate between waves the investment analysis is run on a sample of 626 women.[15]

To adjust for the oversampling of women with depression, we weight the data to account for the regional prevalence of maternal depression, which was 30%.[16] We confirm that our results are not sensitive to whether or not we use weights. Tables 1a and 1b provide descriptive statistics for the original unweighted sample, the baseline weighted sample and the 3-month weighted follow-up sample. Mothers are 26 years old on average, with a mean parity of 2.5 children including the current pregnancy, and about 30% of them are pregnant with their first child. They have, on average, about 8 years of completed education, around 33% of them have 5 or fewer years of education, and their labour force participation rate is 6%. The difference between the weighted and unweighted samples is primarily in depression levels

[15]Attrition arises from 8% miscarriage/stillbirth, 1% of women not being surveyed due to the child's illness, and 14% of women not surveyed for other reasons, primarily that they were staying at the home of their mother in the early postnatal period.

[16]We first weight observations at baseline to account for the difference between the real prevalence of maternal depression and the share of depressed mothers in our sample. We use a second weight to account for the exclusion of mothers receiving the intervention when examining the link between maternal beliefs and investments at 3 months. The weights are constructed by post-stratification. In our sample, the two strata considered are depressed and non-depressed. The weights are constructed by adjusting the observations in each stratum such that, with independence of the sample used, the weighted prevalence of depression in the sample matches the overall depression rate in the study region.

(since the weights are designed to map the 30% depression prevalence of the study area) and in variables known to be associated with the incidence of maternal depression – namely education, wealth and parity.[17] Importantly, there are no statistically significant differences in variable means between the weighted samples at baseline and 3 months. Appendix Table A1 presents descriptive characteristics by attrition status. Column (1) presents characteristics for women who are included in the 3-month sample and column 2 for women who are not. Demographic characteristics as well as expected returns and effort costs are similar across the two groups, which allays the potential concern that the 3 month sample is a selected subset of the baseline sample of women.

The data are of high quality. The research team includes psychiatrists and epidemiologists who specialise in mental health, child development experts and economists familiar with eliciting probabilistic expectations. The authors have worked with the field research team for several years. The data were collected electronically using tablets, uploaded daily to the main server, and checked weekly for inconsistencies. The sampling and the data are described in Sikander et al. (2015) and Turner et al. (2016), also see the Data Appendix B.

4 Measuring Investments and Eliciting Beliefs

4.1 Maternal investments

To measure exclusive breastfeeding, mothers were asked to list all the nutrients given to their child in the last 24 hours; see Data Appendix B for a complete list of all the nutrients evaluated, and Appendix Table A2 for a summary of feeding practices in our study area. Exclusive breastfeeding is defined as giving only breast milk to the child. While 93% of mothers were breastfeeding their 3-month old baby, only 49% were exclusively breastfeeding (Table 1c).

We fielded the Infant-Toddler Home Observation Measurement of the Environment (HOME) inventory questionnaire designed for children aged 0-3 (Cox et al., 2002), which includes a question asking the mother whether she guides the child during play; see Data Appendix B

[17] The Data Appendix B details the construction of the wealth measure.

for details. We focused on structured play and this matches closely the investment portrayed in the expectation questions. The data reveal that 33% of mothers guided their children during play. We conduct robustness checks replacing this with multiple alternative items from the HOME inventory in Section 8.

4.2 Expectations about the human capital production function

We directly elicited probabilities for whether a child will reach specified developmental milestones conditional on high and low levels of maternal investment. Eliciting expectations conditional on hypothetical behaviors has become standard (e.g., Delavande, 2008; Dominitz and Manski, 1997). Recent examples relating to skill production functions include Boneva and Rauh (2018), Cunha et al. (2013, 2020a).

Investments and outcomes. The high and low levels of maternal investment were specified as exclusive breastfeeding for 6 months versus not, and playing frequently with the child to help her learn new things versus playing rarely. We queried beliefs over returns that manifest in four child developmental outcomes, chosen based on discussions with child development experts and psychologists on the research team, who were familiar with the local context. Another appeal of these measures is that they are easily observable to mothers.

The outcomes are experiencing frequent diarrhea (health domain), putting 2-3 words together in speaking by age 2 (cognitive ability); playing happily with other children by age 3 (socioemotional development) and learning well at school. It seems natural to classify the final outcome, learning well at school as a measure of cognitive ability. However, because it refers to a school-age outcome, it is likely to depend upon the pre-school indicators of development across the health, socio-emotional and cognitive domains (Bhalotra and Venkataramani, 2013; Biroli, 2016).[18]

[18]Bhalotra and Venkataramani (2013) leverage sharp implementation of a water chlorination policy that drove diarrhea decline and they show that exposed cohorts do better on Raven tests and PISA school-based tests. Biroli (2016) shows that health influences early non-cognitive development which, in turn, positively influences the evolution of both health and cognitive function and that all facets of human capital display a high degree of persistence.

Eliciting probabilities. Respondents provided their answers using visual aids, as is commonly done in developing countries (Delavande, 2022). In particular, we used a card with bars numbered from 0 to 10. Each bar is made up of equal-sized blocks, and we explain that one block means one chance out of ten. The Data Appendix B details the survey design. We started with a preamble intended to explain the notion of a probability, followed by a question designed to test whether the respondent had understood the concept. For example, the questions were phrased as:

In your view, what is the likelihood that a child will put 2-3 words together in speaking by the age of 2 years:

(i) If the mother plays with the child frequently to help them learn new things?

(ii) If the mother rarely plays with the child to help them learn new things?

Thus we measure beliefs about the human capital production by asking probabilities. Cunha et al. (2013) and Attanasio et al. (2019b) instead ask mothers to report what they think the youngest and oldest age is at which a child will reach a milestone, an approach that requires additional steps to transform answers into probabilities. We chose to elicit probabilities because it avoids these additional steps and allows us to remain agnostic regarding the women's beliefs about the functional form of the human capital production function and its arguments. Moreover, probabilistic beliefs have been successfully elicited in many low income settings similar to our local context (e.g., Delavande, 2022), including in our own pilot work, which gives us confidence in the quality of the data. There is some evidence that, even in developed countries, individuals tend to have difficulties with providing a minimum and a maximum, as shown by the relatively high item non-response rate in Dominitz and Manski (2011). Cunha et al. (2020a) compares the two methods, showing that both yield measures of beliefs that behave sensibly, for instance, being correlated with investments as measured by the HOME score, although the directly elicited probabilities appear uncorrelated with the difficulty of the milestone considered in their context.

Endowments. In Cunha et al. (2013) and Attanasio et al. (2019b) the hypothetical scenarios vary both the investment levels, as we do, and also the child's endowment at birth.

We abstract from birth endowments because mothers have limited opportunities to learn about their child's birth endowment in our setting, for example, birth weight is typically not measured and check ups are unusual.[19]

Individual vs community level production function parameters. Our questions were framed with reference to a mother and child in the community rather than with reference to the respondent and her *unborn child*. This means that we do not elicit the beliefs described in equation (4), but instead beliefs about the general technology of how investments influence child outcome $\theta_{1,i} = \eta_{i,0} + \eta_{i,1}\overline{\theta_{0,i}} + \eta_{i,2}E_i + \overline{\mu_i} + \xi_i = \eta_{i,0} + \eta_{i,2}E_i + \xi_i$. The advantage of using beliefs about the general technology in our empirical analysis is that the random variable μ_i in equation (4) is likely to be correlated with unobserved mother (or child) characteristics, which would bias our estimation of the effect of beliefs on investment decisions. Other studies have adopted this approach for similar reasons (Attanasio et al., 2019b; Boneva and Rauh, 2018; Cunha et al., 2013). Moreover, from a policy perspective, it is beliefs about the general technology that would be targeted by an information intervention. It was also relevant that, in our pilot study, women appeared more comfortable talking about a generic mother-child pair than about their unborn child.

Baseline beliefs. As discussed, the beliefs questions were asked in pregnancy before any investments could be made. This eliminates the risk of feedback from investments to beliefs. If beliefs are asked after investment choices are made, it is possible that they are contaminated by ex-post rationalization or learning (see discussion in Delavande and Zafar, 2019).

4.3 Beliefs over the effort cost of investment.

We elicited expected effort costs associated with the investments by asking the pregnant women at baseline to report on a qualitative scale how tiring they expected it would be to breastfeed or to play with a baby, see Data Appendix B. Again, as this elicitation is before

[19]This choice also considerably reduces the number of questions to respondents which is important not only for pragmatic reasons but also because it limits respondent's fatigue. To account for endowments, one would need to elicit expectations conditional on various endowments level, which implies that the number of questions increases n-fold for n endowment levels.

birth, the responses are free of any feedback effects.

5 Descriptive Statistics

5.1 Heterogeneity in maternal investments

We estimate conditional associations of maternal investments, one at a time, with baseline values of the mother's depression status, education and wealth, using linear regression (Appendix Table A3, columns 1 to 4). Exclusive breastfeeding does not vary with any of these characteristics, but play does. Mothers who are depressed in pregnancy or asset poor are significantly less likely to guide their 3-month old baby during play, possibly indicating that time and energy constraints are more likely to bind in these cases.

We then consider associations of the same predictors with joint investments because the more formal analysis to follow models joint investments. The outcomes are defined to allow that women either make both investments, neither, or one and not the other. There is considerable variation: in our sample, 36% of mothers make neither investment, 32% breastfeed but do not guide play, 15% do not breastfeed but guide play, and only 18% make both investments (Table 1c). We find that 20% of non-depressed mothers in contrast to 11% of depressed mothers make both investments, while 34% of non-depressed mothers and 41% of depressed mothers make neither investment, and these differences are statistically significant (Figure A1). Looking at other characteristics reveals that 20% of mothers with wealth above the sample median, in contrast to 15% with wealth below the median make both investments, while 33% of wealthier mothers compared with 39% of less wealthy mothers make neither investment. Conditional associations show similarly that wealthy and non-depressed mothers are more likely to both play and breastfeed (Appendix Table A3, columns 5 and 6).

5.2 Heterogeneity in expected returns and effort costs

Subjective expectations of returns to investment. We describe the expectations and then discuss data quality considerations. The individual subjective probabilities for the two maternal investment scenarios (high and low) and the four developmental outcomes are

displayed in Figures 1a and 1b. The figures reveal considerable heterogeneity in expectations, with probabilities taking all values between 0 and 1. The modal answer is 1 in the high-investment scenario and 0.5 in the low-investment scenario (with the exception of the case of the breastfeeding investment and the diarrhea outcome). Figures 2a and 2b transform the data into *expected returns*, taking the difference in expected outcomes between the high and low investment cases. Three tendencies emerge from these figures: (*i*) On average, women perceive positive returns to both investments: 74 to 82% of women report higher chances of positive child developmental outcomes with the high relative to the low investment level, and the expected returns are large, varying between 16 pp (for playing-diarrhea) and 39 pp (for breastfeeding-diarrhea).[20] (*ii*) Breastfeeding is expected by women to have a larger impact on child health (an average 39 pp expected reduction in the likelihood that the child will experience diarrhea) than on the other outcomes. Playing is expected to yield the largest gains in influencing learning (with an average increase of 35 pp that the child will learn well at school) and cognitive outcomes (with an average increase of 33 pp that the child will put 2-3 in speaking words by age 2). These differences are all statistically significant at conventional levels.[21] Playing is expected to have only a limited impact on health – notice the large heaping in Figure 2b indicating that 22% expect a zero return. (*iii*) There is substantial heterogeneity in expected returns. For instance, the expected return from breastfeeding on diarrhea is 20 pp in the bottom quartile and 60 pp in the upper quartile. Similarly, the expected return from playing on learning is 10 pp in the bottom quartile and 60 pp in the upper quartile.

We investigated if the heterogeneity in expected returns is correlated with depression and other characteristics of the mother. Simple regressions are in Tables 2a and 2b, and the corresponding distributions are in Appendix Figure A2. There is no evidence that depressed mothers hold systematically different beliefs.[22] This is an important result as it allows us to

[20] An exception to the finding that women perceive positive returns to investment is that only 55% of mothers estimate a positive return to playing in terms of reduced incidence of diarrhea. We may actually have expected most mothers to report zero returns from playing on diarrhea. However, debriefing during the pilot revealed that several respondents reported that playing with the child would, by increasing their time together, enable the mother to spot early signs of diarrhea and act on them quickly.

[21] The difference between the expected return on learning and the expected return on speaking from playing frequently with the child is not statistically significant if calculated as an unpaired sample mean difference, but it is at the 5% level using a paired t-test.

[22] We use a binary measure of maternal depression based on the PHQ-9 following the psychometric liter-

reject one potential channel by which depression reduces maternal investment in children- it implies that differences in investment by maternal depression status cannot be driven by downward biased beliefs about the human capital production function.

We see an education gradient for most investment-outcome pairs and a wealth gradient for some, in line with the finding of Cunha et al. (2013) that women of low socioeconomic status tend to have downward biased beliefs.[23] We might expect higher parity mothers to have different beliefs than those expecting their first child as they may have had the opportunity to learn from previous children, although this will matter less if they also learn from their peers. However, we find that beliefs of first-time mothers are in general not systematically different from those of more experienced mothers. A lot of the heterogeneity in expectations is left unexplained by mother characteristics (R-square in Tables 2a and 2b is always below 0.05). This is typically the case with expectations data, even in other domains (Delavande, 2022).

Data quality checks on elicited expected returns. We conduct several validity checks to assess the quality of the expectations data. In particular, first we calibrate reported beliefs against available benchmarks to assess their plausibility. Then we analyze item response rates, whether the data exhibit the basic properties of probabilities, and we look for commonly known flags of mistakes or limited attention.

There are no reliable estimates of the parameters of the actual production function for skills in this context. However, the beliefs data are consistent with a benchmark provided by the Pakistan 2012-2013 Demographic Health Survey (DHS), and with data on less educated women in America presented in Cunha (2016) for a US sample. The DHS show that the proportion of children that experienced diarrhea in the two weeks prior to the interview was 25-33% (depending on the child's age), which is similar to the average expectation that mothers report in our sample when the mother exclusively breastfeeds (25%), or guides play

ature. Women were classified as depressed when their score was 10 or above. There is no gradient even if we use a different cut-off of the depression score (Appendix Tables A4a and A4b). A possible explanation of this is that women answer questions about the technology of skills in their community.

[23]The education gradient is essentially a difference between mothers with no education (15% of the sample) vs some education. For example, mothers with any education at all expect that exclusively breastfeeding for 6 months reduces the probability that a child experiences diarrhea by 8.5pp more than women with no education (column (4), Table 2a). Wealth is measured as an index of asset ownership.

(35%) (Table 1b and Appendix Table A6). Cunha (2016) documents that 72% of children in a US sample spoke partial sentences by the age of 2, comparing well with 70-74% in our sample for the high investment scenario. Women in the US sample expect an 82% chance of a 2-year old speaking a 3-word sentence with high investment and high endowment, which is comparable to the maternal expectation in our sample. Expectations in the low investment and low endowment scenario in the US sample are also very similar to the expectations under low investments in our sample, at 46%. Although crude, these comparisons suggest that the subjective expectations of sample women are broadly in line with outcome realizations.

The item non-response rate is low, at 5.6%. The probabilistic answer respect the monotonicity property of nested events. This is clear from analysis of the practice question that we put to all women at the start of the expectations module. We asked women what they thought the likelihood was of a woman in the community going to the market (a) in the next 2 days and (b) in the next 2 weeks. The distribution of respondent answers to these questions is displayed in Appendix Figure A3. The figure shows a clear shift of the distribution to the right when the time horizon increases, highlighting that women recognize that the probability of going to the market is higher the longer the time span allowed. Only 3.3% of respondents violated this monotonicity property of probabilities by reporting a strictly larger likelihood for the shorter time horizon. This is similar to results from other developing country surveys, and at the lower end when compared to surveys in developed countries (Delavande and Kohler, 2009; Delavande et al., 2017).

We investigated the extent to which an individual woman provides the same answer to the series of probabilistic questions, as this is possibly an indication that she is paying limited attention to the questions. Figure A4 shows the distribution of repeated values of beliefs for the high and low investment levels for the same woman. Only about 10% of women provided four or more repeat combinations of answers in the probabilistic questions out of the eight outcome-investment combinations, and about 20% did not repeat any combinations, which is reassuring.

We observe that 19% of women report a zero return for at least one investment-outcome pair, which is plausible.[24] More educated mothers are less likely to report four or more zero

[24]For example, it is plausible that some women do not perceive a connection between playing with a child

returns (column 3, Table A5). What is more worrying is that 22% of women report more than one negative return, which suggests they think that breastfeeding or playing with the child is detrimental to child development. Women who report negative expected returns are more likely to have no education, and to have below-median wealth. We will investigate sensitivity of the model estimates to excluding women who report negative returns (see section 8).

Overall, average probabilities of reaching specific milestones are consistent with the available evidence on outcome realizations; women appear comfortable reporting probabilistic beliefs using the 10 bar score card; the vast majority of responses respect the basic properties of probabilities; we find a socio-economic gradient in expected returns to early life investments as has been found in other settings (e.g., Boneva and Rauh, 2018; Cunha et al., 2013); and very few women repeat their answers. This gives us confidence in using the expected returns data in our empirical analysis.

Expected effort costs of maternal investments. We elicit effort costs using a Likert scale but collapse the data into a binary indicator of whether the mother reports that the investment is either sometimes or most of the time tiring. We find that 39% and 35%, respectively, of women anticipate finding breastfeeding and playing with the child tiring, see Figure 3. Investigating conditional associations in expected effort costs in Table 3 with a linear model, we find that there is a significant gradient in expected costs by maternal depression. Depressed mothers are 9.7 pp and 8 pp more likely to expect that breastfeeding and playing respectively will be tiring. This is consistent with the third channel discussed in Section 2 where we highlight that fatigue may increase the direct cost of maternal investment.[25]

There is also an education gradient in expected effort costs. Mothers with 6-10 years of education are 13 pp less likely to expect to feel tired from breastfeeding compared to mothers with no education and 21 pp less likely to expect to be tired from playing. The education gradient in breastfeeding is attenuated when controlling for wealth, but the education gradient in playing persists. There is a significant wealth gradient in the expected

and the child's diarrhea risk, or between breastfeeding a child, and the child doing well at school.

[25]Unconditional associations on the complete likert scale are shown in Appendix Table A7.

costs of investment, steeper than for expected returns, conditional on education. A one standard deviation increase in the wealth index is associated with a 7 pp lower likelihood of finding breastfeeding a tiring activity, 9 pp lower for the cost of playing. Also, consistent with intuition, older mothers are more likely to expect playing to be tiring. The plausibility of this gradient increases confidence in the data.

We find a tendency for a positive association between expected returns and costs, even after conditioning on mothers' characteristics (see Appendix Table A8). This finding goes against the idea that mothers who anticipate higher returns for an investment internalize the cost of the investment and do not view it as costly. This underlines the importance of collecting effort costs data alongside expected returns data because omitting costs might lead us to over-estimate the role played by expected returns (see discussion in Wiswall and Zafar, 2015).

6 Empirical Strategy

Recall that the mother's problem is to choose the investment levels $E_i = (e_{i1}, e_{i2})$ that maximize her subjective expected utility given in equation (5). Therefore, the probability that mother i chooses investment levels $(e_{i1} = j_1, e_{i2} = j_2)$ conditional on beliefs P_i, expected cost $\mathcal{E}_i[C_{E_i}]$ and characteristics X_i, including non-labour income y_i and depression status d is given by:

$$Pr(e_{i1} = j_1, e_{i2} = j_2 | X_i, P_i, \mathcal{E}_i[C_{E_i}]) = Pr\Big[\mathcal{E}U_i(j_1, j_2) > \mathcal{E}U_i(t_1, t_2), \\ \forall\ (t_1, t_2) \neq (j_1, j_2) \Big| X_i, P_i, \mathcal{E}_i[C_{E_i}]\Big] \quad (7)$$

We make some additional assumptions in order to be able to estimate equation (7). Although we are making inference using the expected probability distribution of joint investments $P_i(\theta_i|e_{i1}, e_{i2})$, women were asked their expected returns from individual investments, i.e., $P_i(\theta_i|e_{i1})$ and $P_i(\theta_i|e_{i2})$. We assume the mother sets the other investment at the modal value of the investments in the community (i.e., no playing and no exclusive breastfeed-

ing). This assumption is motivated by the fact that the vast majority of respondents report the mode of their distribution of beliefs when asked for a point estimate (Delavande and Rohwedder, 2011). Our baseline specification assumes that there is no subjective complementarity between the investments, i.e. $P_i(\theta_i|e_{i1}, e_{i2}) = max(P_i(\theta_i|e_{i1}), P_i(\theta_i|e_{i2}))$, but we test the sensitivity of our results to this assumption in Section 8.

We also make some parametric assumptions. For the overall expected cost of effort, we assume:

$$\delta_d \mathcal{E}_i[C_{E_i}] = \delta_{1d} I(e_{i1} = 1) \cdot I_i(e_1 = c) \; + \; \delta_{2d} I(e_{i2} = 1) \cdot I_i(e_2 = c),$$

where $I(e = 1)$ is a binary indicator function equal to 1 if mother i engages in investment e and $I_i(e = c)$ is a binary indicator function equal to 1 if mother i expects investment e to be costly. This means for example that mother i expects to incur the cost δ_1 of breastfeeding if she breastfeeds and expects breastfeeding to be tiring. Similarly for the cost δ_2 of playing. Mothers who report that breastfeeding or playing is not tiring have a cost of zero.

For the utility derived from leisure, we assume:

$$v_d(T - s_d - h - \tau_{e1,e2}) = \gamma_{e1,e2} X_i$$

The characteristics X_i include the mother's baseline depression status, age, education, parity, husband's education, a household-assets wealth index and the gender of the newborn. This captures systematic differences in investments by mothers' characteristics.

With these assumptions, the woman's subjective expected utility is given by:

$$\begin{aligned} \mathcal{E}U_i(y_i, X_i, P_i, \mathcal{E}_i[C_{E_i}], e_{i1}, e_{i2}) = \alpha_d ln(y_i) + \omega_{hd} P_i(h_i > \Theta_H | e_{i1}, e_{i2}) + \\ \omega_{ad} P_i(a_i > \Theta_a | e_{i1}, e_{i2}) + \omega_{sd} P_i(s_i > \Theta_s | e_{i1}, e_{i2}) + \\ \omega_{ld} P_i(l_i > \Theta_l | e_{i1}, e_{i2}) - \; \delta_{1d} I(e_{i1} = 1) \cdot I_i(e_1 = c) - \\ \delta_{2d} I(e_{i2} = 1) \cdot I_i(e_2 = c) + \gamma_{e1,e2} X_i + \varepsilon_{E_i}, \quad (8) \end{aligned}$$

where, as discussed in Section 2, the developmental outcomes are early childhood health h_i, cognitive ability a_i, and socio-emotional development s_i as well as learning well at school l_i. We estimate equation (8) using a multinomial logit model by assuming the random terms

ε_{ei} to be independent for every individual i and investment level $e = (e_{i1}, e_{i2})$ and with a Type I extreme value distribution. The four alternatives are: (*1*) neither breastfeed nor play with the child, (*2*) breastfeed but not play, (*3*) play but not breastfeed, and (*4*) both breastfeed and play. The probability of choosing investment (j_1, j_2) is thus given by:

$$Pr(e_{i1} = j_1, e_{i2} = j_2 | y_i, X_i, P_i, \mathcal{E}_i[C_{E_i}]) = \frac{\exp V_i(y_i, X_i, P_i, \mathcal{E}_i[C_{E_i}], j_1, j_2)}{\sum_{t_1 \in (0,1), t_2 \in (0,1)} \exp V_i(y_i, X_i, P_i, \mathcal{E}_i[C_{E_i}], t_1, t_2)}, \tag{9}$$

where V_i is the expected utility maximised in equation (8), net of the of ε_{ei}. Using the beliefs and expected costs data as well as actual investments, we make inference on the structural parameters $\omega_{j,j\in(h,a,s,l)}, \delta_{j,j\in(0,1)}, \gamma_{e1,e2}$.

Note that in our multinomial logit set up, the utility associated with each investment varies with a set of attributes that are investment- and mother-specific (the beliefs and expected cost) as well as with mother-specific characteristics (the X_i in the leisure function). To create a parallel with the classic example of a multinomial choice model of transportation modes, the beliefs and expected costs are the "attributes" of the maternal investments in the same way as cost and commuting time are the attributes of the transportation modes. For example, the health belief associated with the alternative $(e_{i1} = j_1, e_{i2} = j_2)$ is the subjective probability $P_i(h_i > \Theta_H | j_1, j_2)$ of not having diarrhea under the investment $(e_{i1} = j_1, e_{i2} = j_2)$, which is derived directly from the elicited probabilities. The preference parameter ω_h, which is the coefficient associated with the subjective probabilities $P_i(h_i > \Theta_H | e_1, e_2)$ in our estimation, is identified (up to scale) using the variation in probabilities across investments and mothers. It captures how much mothers value the health of their children. The same applies to the other preference parameters $\omega_{j,j\in(a,s,l)}$. The cost parameters $\delta_{j,j\in(1,2)}$ are identified using the variation in expected effort costs across investments and mothers. The preference and cost parameters are the same for all four investments.

The preference parameters $\gamma_{e1,e2}$ however vary with the investment because the X_i are individual-specific and hence identical across investments. For identification, we need to normalise the $\gamma_{e1,e2}$ to zero for one alternative since only differences in utility matter (e.g., Train, 2009). We normalise the $\gamma_{e1,e2}$ for the alternative (*1*), neither breastfeed nor play. We

present results with and without these demographic controls X_i. Note that $ln(y_i)$ is the same for all maternal investments and, therefore, the preference parameters for log consumption α_d is not identified.

While the multinomial logit model has been widely used for the modeling of multiple choices, its assumptions could prove demanding for our specification of joint investments. We address this concern by also estimating a mixed logit model that relaxes the Independence of Irrelevant Alternatives (IIA) assumption.

7 Results

7.1 Parameter estimates

We start by estimating a simpler multinomial logit model in which there is no heterogeneity in preferences for child outcomes and in the marginal cost of effort by depression status ($\omega_{j1} = \omega_{j0}$ for $j = h, a, s, l$, $\delta_{11} = \delta_{10}$ and $\delta_{21} = \delta_{20}$). The estimates are displayed in Table 4. We first show results assuming that mothers only value one of the four developmental outcomes (one at a time), and then we present estimates allowing all developmental outcomes to enter the mother's utility function. The two main results from this table are that (i) women who expect higher returns from a particular investment are more likely to engage in that investment; and (ii) mothers who find playing costly are less likely to play. Thus there is evidence that subjective maternal expectations over both returns and costs influence key early life investments in children.

First, consider results for the ability to speak (columns 1 without controls and column 2 with controls). The preference parameter ω_s, which is the coefficient associated with beliefs about the returns to breastfeeding and playing in terms of the ability to speak, is positive and statistically significant, suggesting that maternal investment choices are determined by mothers' subjective beliefs about returns to investments *and* that they care about this developmental dimension. The estimated cost of playing, δ_2, is negative and significant, suggesting that mothers who find playing costly are less likely to play. The estimated cost of breastfeeding, δ_1, is not statistically different from zero, suggesting that the cost of breastfeeding is

not a deterrent to exclusively breastfeeding a newborn at the age of 3 months in our sample.

Columns (3) to (8) of table 4 show the estimates when we consider each of the other child developmental outcomes individually. The preference parameter for health (defined as diarrhea incidence, columns 3-4) is positive but about a third smaller in magnitude than the preference parameter for speaking, and is not precisely estimated. The preference parameter for socio-emotional development (defined as the child playing happily with other children by age 3, columns 5 and 6), is also positive, only slightly smaller in magnitude than the one associated with speaking, and borderline significant (p-value=0.074 without controls and 0.111 with controls). The preference parameter for learning (defined as the ability of a child to learn well in school, columns 7 and 8) is the largest in size, almost twice the size of the preference parameter for speaking, and statistically significant at the 1% level.

Controlling for mother-level covariates does not change the magnitude or precision of the preference and marginal cost of effort parameters (see the first vs the second column for each outcome). As a matter of fact, once we condition on expected returns and effort cost, maternal characteristics explain little of the variation in investments (see Table A9, which presents the effect of mother's characteristics for all investments compared to no play and no breastfeeding). Women who were diagnosed with depression are less likely to make both investments (even after conditioning on beliefs and effort cost). Wealthier women are more likely to make both investments as opposed to making no investment. And women who already have at least two other children are less likely to choose playing and no breastfeeding. Note that we do not find that the index child's gender influences investment, unlike other studies (e.g., Jayachandran and Kuziemko, 2011) which is possibly due to the fact that we focus on investment at a very early age.

We next estimate equation (9) by considering the child's health, cognitive, psycho-emotional, and learning outcomes jointly in the decision-making process, see columns (9) and (10) of table 4. Now only the preference parameter for learning well at school is statistically significantly different from zero at 1%. A reason for the dominance of this outcome may be that doing well at school requires success with the other outcomes – it requires cognitive ability (putting 2-3 words together by age 2), being healthy (lower diarrhea) and being socially well-grounded (playing happily with other children by age 3), so it may in fact

incorporate concern over these other outcomes.

Importantly, the ordering of the estimated preference parameters is in line with self-reported valuations of developmental outcomes that we also elicited. In our sample, 80% of mothers responded that the ability of a child learning well is very important for a child's development, in contrast with a share of 64 to 67% for the other outcomes (table 1a), and this difference is statistically significant at the 1% level.[26]

In all the specifications in Table 4, we find a negative and precisely estimated cost for playing, while the cost for breastfeeding is not precisely estimated.

Goodness of fit: We assess the fit of the estimated model by comparing actual investments to the model-predicted probability of the investments. See Appendix Table A10, which shows that the model fit is very good not only overall but, importantly, for a number of sub-samples.

7.2 Choice elasticity

We next use the model parameter estimates to analyse the predicted responsiveness of investment choice to changes in expected returns and costs. We focus on the specification that estimates the preference parameters for all developmental outcomes jointly (Column 10, Table 4), and report results for expected returns in terms of the probability of a child learning well at school.

Results are shown in Table 5. A 1% increase in the expected return to breastfeeding increases by 0.47% the predicted probability that a woman decides only to breastfeed, and reduces the probability of neither breastfeeding nor playing by 0.23%. A 1% increase in the expected return to playing with the child increases the predicted probability of playing by 0.62%, which is the same increase in the probability of making both investments when the expected return from both increases by 1%. These elasticities are slightly higher to elasticities of school choices to expected earnings (0.12) and employment probability (0.34) found in Pakistan (Delavande and Zafar, 2019).

[26] We refrain from drawing conclusions about the mother's ranking of preferences for educational attainment or language development over health, recognizing that our marker for health at 3 month (frequent diarrhea) is only one indicator of health, and one that, in poor communities in Pakistan, is so common that it may be regarded as "natural".

We next look at the elasticity of investments to expected costs (last column of Table 5). A 1% increase in the cost of playing (playing becomes more tiring as opposed to not tiring) reduces the predicted probability of a mother playing with the child by 0.15% (irrespective of whether or not she also breastfeeds). Since we found no evidence that the perceived costs of breastfeeding influence mother's choices, we do not explore responsiveness to this cost. There are no previous studies on the elasticity of maternal investment with respect to perceived costs.

7.3 Heterogeneity in preferences

So far, we have assumed that all mothers have the same preference parameters for child development ω_j and marginal cost of effort parameters δ_j. We now relax this assumption to evaluate whether heterogeneity in preferences over child developmental outcomes and effort cost explains heterogeneity in investment decisions. Our main focus is on depression but we look at heterogeneity by education and SES. To do this, we interact the expected returns and marginal cost of effort with mother characteristics, allowing ω_j, δ_1 and δ_2 to differ by characteristics. In Column 1 of Table 6, we find limited evidence of heterogeneity by depression, which speaks against the first channel discussed in Section 2, preferences, as being an important driver of difference in investment.[27] We also find no heterogeneity in the marginal cost of effort. More generally, there is limited evidence of heterogeneity by mothers' education and SES (columns 2 and 3).

In order to explore heterogeneity in preference more flexibly, we also estimate a mixed logit model where the parameters ω_j are assumed to have a normal distribution.[28] The mixed logit relaxes the Independence of Irrelevant Alternatives (IIA) imposed by the multinomial logit. The results in Appendix Table A11 are in line with our main results and indicate no heterogeneity in preferences for child development, as we systematically reject the hypothesis that the variance of the normal distribution of ω_j is different from zero. This is consistent with the results presented in Table 6.

[27] There is a statistically significant difference in the health preferences parameter by depression status, but the estimates for each group are not statistically significantly different from zero.

[28] When estimating the mixed logit model we replace the categorical variables of education and parity with their continuous version in order to achieve convergence.

All in all, these results point to limited if any systematic differences in mothers' valuations of child development outcomes and marginal cost of effort. This is in contrast to Cunha (2014) that finds that white parents value children developmental outcomes significantly more than black parents in the US based on hypothetical choice questions.

7.4 The role of depression

In Section 2 we laid out the channels through which depression potentially impacts maternal investments. We now consider what light our estimates shed on this.

Studying heterogeneity in elicited beliefs over returns to investment in children, we found no evidence that depressed mothers expect lower returns (Section 5.2). We also find no evidence that depression mutes preferences for child developmental outcomes, based on our analysis of heterogeneity in preferences (Section 7.3). We note though, that as our preference parameter $\omega_{\theta d}$ captures the discounted utility from child development, had we found a lower value of $\omega_{\theta d}$ for depressed mothers, we would not have been able to identify whether it was driven by a lower discount rate (which is consistent with depression, see Ifcher and Zarghamee (2011); Lempert and Pizzagalli (2010)) or by a lower preference for child development.

We do, however, find evidence consistent with depression raising the perceived effort cost of making the investments. Depression, being associated with fatigue, could be associated with a higher marginal cost of effort δ_d and/or higher effort C_{E_i} per investment. Again, the heterogeneity analysis in Section 7.3 refutes the idea that the marginal cost of effort δ_d differs by depression status. But our analysis of the expected effort cost data in Section 5.2 shows that there is an important gradient in C_{E_i} by maternal depression. This, coupled with the fact that the marginal cost of effort (for playing) is an important determinant of investment (Section 7.1), suggests that depressed mothers invest less than their counterparts because of their elevated expected effort cost. We are less well placed to evaluate whether depression may impact the mother's investments by tightening constraints on disposable time through increasing sick days s_d, although results we discuss in the next section indicate that this is not a major factor.

8 Robustness Checks

This section reports a series of validation and specification checks designed to assess the robustness of our results.

Investments constraints. We first discuss time constraints and then physiological constraints on breastfeeding. The maximization problem stated in equation (8) assumes an interior solution. If women were in fact time-constrained in their investment choices, they may not be able to act on their subjective expected returns. In this case, the coefficient associated with the beliefs would not be precisely estimated. However, this is not what we see in Table 4.

Still, if some women are more constrained than others, the coefficients we estimate may be biased. We investigate this by allowing the coefficients associated with beliefs (ω) to vary with the *a priori* likelihood that a mother experiences time constraints. First, we compare mothers living with an older female child (62% of the sample), and the rest. Given anecdotal evidence that older girls help the mother with household chores and childcare, we expect they contribute to relaxing time constraints. For the same reason, we group mothers by whether or not the child's grandmother lives in the household (55% of the sample). Third, we compare women who live in farming households (60% of the sample) with those who do not, as women often contribute to farm labour, tightening time constraints. We find no systematic significant differences across these groups (Appendix Table A13). While this evidence is not conclusive, it is consistent with non-binding time constraints.

To investigate whether time constraints might bind for depressed and not non-depressed mothers (consistent with depressed mothers experiencing more sick days, or fatigue), we interacted the three indicators of time constraints with depression status. We find no systematic significant differences across the subgroups (table not shown) but this may reflect that we do not have the statistical power to detect differences.

We have implicitly assumed that exclusive breastfeeding is a choice. However, some mothers may be unable to breastfeed for a number of medical or physiological reasons. To investigate this, we restrict the sample to women that report always having had enough

money to buy food during pregnancy, and then to women with weight above the 10^{th} percentile at the time the investments were measured (3 months). Appendix Table A14 shows that the estimates for these relatively unconstrained samples are qualitatively very similar to those in Table 4. We are unable to test constraints imposed by the health of the child as we do not have child birth weight or any other measure of their ability to breastfeed.

Complementarity of the investments. The baseline estimation assumes that there is no (subjective) complementarity of the investments (Assumption 3). We now discuss how we assessed this assumption after the data used in the main analysis were collected. We recruited a different sample of twenty women in Pakistan of similar background to the women in this study, and elicited from them their probabilistic beliefs about the returns from making joint investments while also asking them the original questions with the investments presented independently.[29] Using responses to both sets of questions we can estimate perceived complementarities between breastfeeding and playing and correct our estimates in the main sample accordingly. More specifically, we seek to identify θ in the following equation:

$$P_i(a_i|e_{i1}=1,e_{i2}=1) = max\big(P_i(a_i|e_{i1}=1), P_i(a_i|e_{i2}=1)\big) + \theta min\big(P_i(a_i|e_{i1}=1), P_i(a_i|e_{i2}=1)\big) \quad (10)$$

Data from this small pilot reveal an estimated θ of 0.018, or that mothers expect a complementarity among investments of 1.8%. We replicated Table 4 using equation (10) to evaluate $P_i(a_i|e_{i1}=1,e_{i2}=1)$ instead of assuming no complementarity. We present estimates with the estimated θ of 1.8% and, to analyze sensitivity to the alternative values, also set θ to 5% and 10%, see Appendix Table A15. The model estimates are very similar to those obtained using the baseline specification assuming no complementarity, and this is the case independently of the level of complementarity assumed.

[29] Women were asked the likelihood of a specific developmental outcome occurring when (*i*) the mother does not play and does not breastfeed, (*ii*) the mother breastfeeds but does not play, (*iii*) the mother does not breastfeed but plays, and (*iv*) the mother both breastfeeds and plays. We thank Ammara Riaz, Ayesha Riaz and Farah Said for invaluable help in the implementation of the questionnaire in the field.

Sensitivity to samples. We excluded from the analysis sample women who were treated for depression with psychotherapy that emphasised positive thinking and also encouraged positive thoughts about their baby. Our concern was that the intervention might have directly encouraged women to increase their investments in children, or that it may have led to changes in expected returns and effort costs in ways that we do not observe because we elicit expectations in the baseline survey, conducted when the women respondents were pregnant. As a robustness check, we re-estimated the model including treated mothers. The estimates are similar to those in Table 4, see Column (1) of Appendix Table A16.

As discussed in Section 5, while the elicited beliefs data are on average of high quality, some women report negative expected returns from undertaking the investments. We assess the robustness of our results to how we treat these answers. First, we exclude mothers who expect more than one negative return out of eight, and the results are very similar to those in Table 4, see column (2), Appendix Table A16. In an alternative specification where we use the whole sample, we replace negative returns with zero returns.[30] Again, we obtain similar results to Table 4, see column (3) of Appendix Table A16.

We elicited expected returns and effort costs in pregnancy to avoid feedback effects from behaviour to beliefs/cost. However, our main sample includes mothers of all parity, including women who may have had the opportunity to learn from earlier pregnancies. This could bias the preferences parameters if women endowed with high expected returns were more likely to have invested and revised their beliefs upward. As a robustness check we re-estimated the model restricting the sample to mothers who were pregnant with their first child at baseline; see columns (5-6), Appendix Table A16. Although slightly less precise, the results are similar. Finally, we also replicate our baseline model without using weights, and again, the results are robust (column 7, Table A16).

Alternative definitions of play. We investigate the robustness of our results to alternative definitions of the play investment. Instead of using one item from the HOME inventory,

[30]This affects 8 to 11% of the sample, depending on the outcomes and investments. One exception is experiencing diarrhea with the playing investments, where this affects 24% of the sample.

we use: (*i*) the overall HOME score; (*ii*) a score based on items related to stimulation (i.e., those from the Responsivity and Involvement sections); (*iii*) the first principal component (PCA) of the items related to stimulation. We assume that women in the top tertile in terms of these measures are those who play frequently to make it comparable to our current main playing variable. See Data Appendix B for details. Table 7 results show that the results using these 3 other definitions for play are very similar to our baseline results.

Measurement error in beliefs. We acknowledge that the beliefs may be measured with error because child development in a certain domain may be hard to capture with one milestone. As a robustness check, we construct a composite measure of beliefs (the average of all the beliefs elicited) to capture beliefs about the perceived return of a single underlying scalar of human capital. The results are very similar to those obtained from the beliefs related to "learning well at school" (col 4, Table A16).

Within village correlations of beliefs, cost and investments. Subjective expectations of returns and effort costs may respond to social norms. And the questions eliciting returns from individual women were phrased to ask her what she thought the returns for a generic woman in her community would be. To the extent that women live in close-knit communities, their investment behaviours may also be similar. This generates the concern that a spatial correlation in beliefs and investments could generate the results in Table 4 without women acting on their beliefs. To investigate this, we analysed the variation in beliefs, costs, and investments between and within villages. See Figure A5, where panel (a) depicts a box plot of the expected return on "learning well" from breastfeeding for each of the 40 villages under study, showing considerable within village variation. Although not shown, similar variation is evident for the other developmental outcomes and investments. Panel (b) shows that there is also a lot of within village variation in the expected costs and investment realizations. Overall, this undermines the concern.

9 Policy Experiments

We use the estimated preference parameters to simulate the behavioural responses of mothers to a series of different plausible policy interventions targeted at increasing breastfeeding and stimulation during early-life. These include interventions that manipulate expected returns, effort costs, mother's education, and depression status. The simulations assume that all women fully comply with the intervention (e.g., they fully revise their expectations, they all recover from depression, etc...), and the results we present will therefore constitute the upper bound of the effects of an actual policy.

The estimates are in Table 8 for the full sample and in Appendix Tables A17a and A17b for various subsamples. Column (0) shows the baseline distributions of investments predicted by the multinomial logit model (Table 4, column 10) before any of the policies are introduced.

We first discuss the average predicted probabilities of making the four possible investments under different **information interventions**, see columns (1)-(3). The first shifts the expected returns of less wealthy mothers to the average of wealthy mothers (i.e., above median wealth index). This has limited impacts on overall investments, consistent with the raw data showing only moderate differences in expected returns across wealth groups (7.3 pp on average) as well as with the heterogeneity in expected returns within the low wealth group. The second intervention raises the expected return to each investment by 10 pp for all women while the third raises beliefs by increasing the expected return to each investment by the interquartile range of the average expected return from single investments (an increase of 43 pp on average). As a comparison, an education program providing information about the importance of the language environment for a child's language development had an intention to treat on beliefs of 32% of a standard deviation (which corresponds to 10pp in our study) and a local average treatment of 69% (20pp in our study) (Cunha et al., 2020b).[31] With the former intervention, the predicted probabilities of breastfeeding and playing increase by 1.4 pp (2.9% of baseline) and 0.9 pp (2.9% of baseline), respectively. The latter intervention raises beliefs by increasing the expected return to each investment by the interquartile range

[31]The beliefs were about the importance of the language environment for a child's language development and the setting was the US.

of the average expected return from single investments (an increase of 43 pp on average).[32] We now see large increases in the probabilities of breastfeeding and playing of 6.3 pp (13%) and 3.8 pp (12.4%) respectively. Overall, a large increase in expected returns is required to obtain a large increase in investments.

We next simulate results of eliminating effort costs of playing, which affects the 36% of mothers who report that playing is tiring. We notionally ascribe this to the creation of a **mother group** or **playgroup** in the community, where effort is pooled and mothers feel supported, see column (4). This is associated with an increase of 3.8 pp (12.4% of baseline) in the predicted probability of play, and a corresponding reduction in the predicted probability of making neither investment of 2 pp (5.7%).

We then combine first the second and then the third information intervention with the cost alleviating intervention. The predicted probability of playing increases by 4.8 pp (15.3%) in the former case, and by 7.9 pp (25.5%) in the latter. Note that the effect of combining the two policies is slightly larger than their separate effect (e.g., 7.9 pp in column 6 versus 3.8+3.8=7.6pp in columns 3 and 4). The difference is small but this suggests that effort costs might prevent mothers from fully acting on newly acquired beliefs.

Overall, a fairly large effect on playing can be achieved by jointly increasing perceived returns and lifting effort costs. This combined intervention is also effective at reducing the gaps in investment across groups. It reduces by about two-thirds the gap in playing between low and high educated mothers, low and high wealth mothers, and mothers who were and were not depressed in pregnancy (i.e. at baseline) (see Appendix table A17a).

The next simulation investigates impacts of an intervention that **treats maternal depression**, column (7), which affects 30% of the sample. We posit that treated women are affected in three ways: the covariate indicating depression is set to zero, their expected costs are set to the average cost of non-depressed mothers, and their expected returns are set to the average returns reported by non-depressed mothers. This is associated with an increase of 1.1 pp (2.2% of baseline) in breastfeeding and of 2.5 pp (7.9%) in playing. In the sub-

[32]The expected probability of achieving a developmental outcome cannot be higher than 1. In the scenario in which the new computed expected probability would violates this, we obtain the desired increase in expected returns by lowering the expected probability of achieving the developmental milestone when mothers do not invest.

sample of depressed mothers, treating depression has, as we may expect, larger effects: an increase of 3.7 pp (7.9% of baseline in this sample) in breastfeeding and 8.2 pp (34.6%) in playing, see Appendix Table A17a, panel A, column (7). Treating depression is the policy with the largest effects in this subsample, where investments are low at baseline, with effects similar to that of the intervention that simultaneously targets an increase in expected returns and elimination of psychic costs. This is consistent with the results in Baranov et al. (2020), who find that mothers treated for depression make larger time-intensive and monetary investments in children as long as seven years after the end of the intervention.

Finally, we consider an **education** program that results in all women achieving at least ten years of education, which would affect the three-fourths of our sample that had less than 10 years of education. The education covariate is set to 10+ years and, at the same time, the expected beliefs and costs of less-educated women are set to the averages for women with 10 or more years of education. We see fairly limited effects on average (column 8, Table 8), though the effects are larger among the subsample of less-educated mothers (Appendix Table A17a, column (8), panel B): for example, educating mothers increases playing by 3 ppt (10.1% of baseline in this subsample). Education is a relatively costly program compared, for instance, with providing information on returns and creating a playgroup in the community. However, education is likely to have benefits beyond the making of investments, for instance, on choices that influence the mother's own wellbeing.

Now consider heterogeneous impacts of the simulated policies. We see larger effects of some of these policies on women who report zero or negative returns (panel D of Appendix Table A17b) and on women who report high effort costs (panel E). Among women who expect to find breastfeeding or playing costly most of the time, the mother group intervention increases play by 9.8 pp (41.5% of baseline), and the intervention that simultaneously increases returns and lowers costs increases play by 13.8 pp (58.5%). This is the largest increase among all the policies and subsamples we consider. While targeting interventions to these more responsive groups is currently difficult, if future household surveys were to elicit expected returns and costs from mothers, this problem could be alleviated.

Overall, our simulations suggest that providing information that increases women's subjective expected returns, alleviating psychic or effort costs, treating depression, and educat-

ing women all tend to increase maternal investment in children. Moreover, the returns to intervening are higher in the subgroups that are most treatable on account of low expected returns, high expected costs, baseline maternal depression, or low levels of maternal education. We find particularly large increases in investments in children from policies that alleviate anticipated effort costs among women who are screened as suffering clinical depression.

10 Conclusions

There is an ongoing global learning crisis, with an estimated 39 percent of the world's children under age five failing to attain their cognitive potential (e.g., Grantham-McGregor et al., 2007; UNESCO, 2014). In this study we focus on the role of maternal investments. Low levels of maternal investment in children may be driven by weak preferences for child development outcomes, low expectations for returns to investments, or by financial and psychic resource constraints. We find limited heterogeneity in preferences, but that subjective expectations of both returns to and effort costs play a significant role in explaining mother's investments in newborns. Simulation exercises suggest that policies aimed at increasing the mother's beliefs about returns and alleviating effort costs, through providing information on returns, creating mothers' groups, or treating postnatal depression, can substantially raise average investment levels. Future research is needed to better understand how to change women's expected returns. First, not all beliefs are equally responsive to information (Ciancio et al., 2020). Second, large effects on investments requires large changes in beliefs. More work is also needed to identify the most cost-effective way to alleviate effort cost among new mothers, especially in low income settings where poverty and depression are widespread.

We provide the first results showing that perceived cost of effort among mothers constrains their investment in breastfeeding and play. Moreover, we identify one important descriptive predictor of perceived costs among mothers of newborns, which is perinatal depression. Our results are embedded within a more general model of maternal investments that allows for biased beliefs over the technology of skill formation, and for differences in beliefs by socioeconomic status.

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Figure 1a: Subjective probabilities of developmental outcomes by breastfeeding investment level

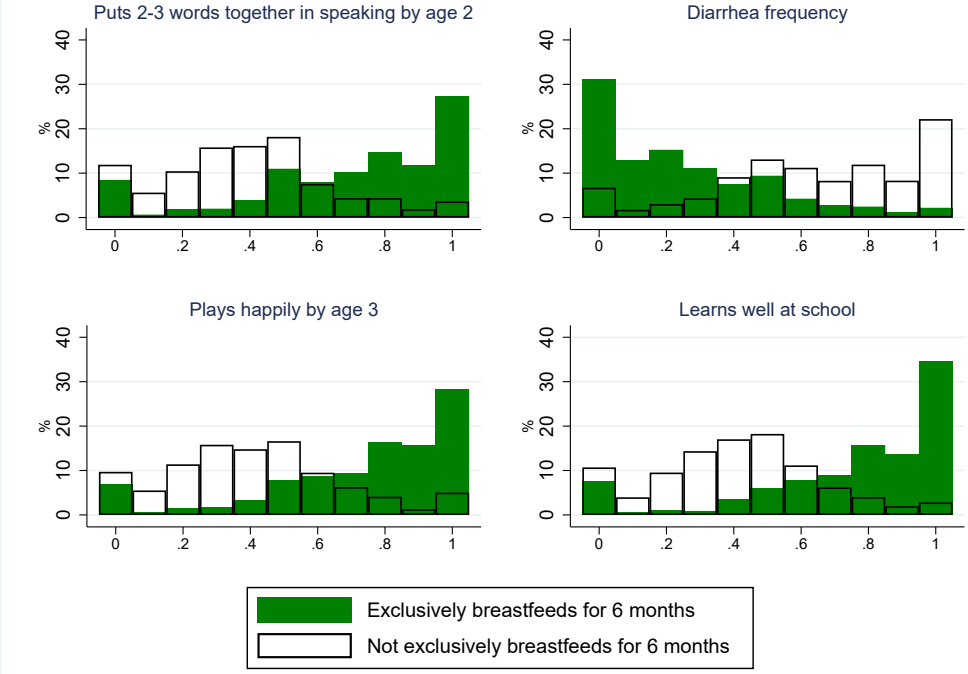


Figure 1b: Subjective probabilities of developmental outcomes by playing investment level

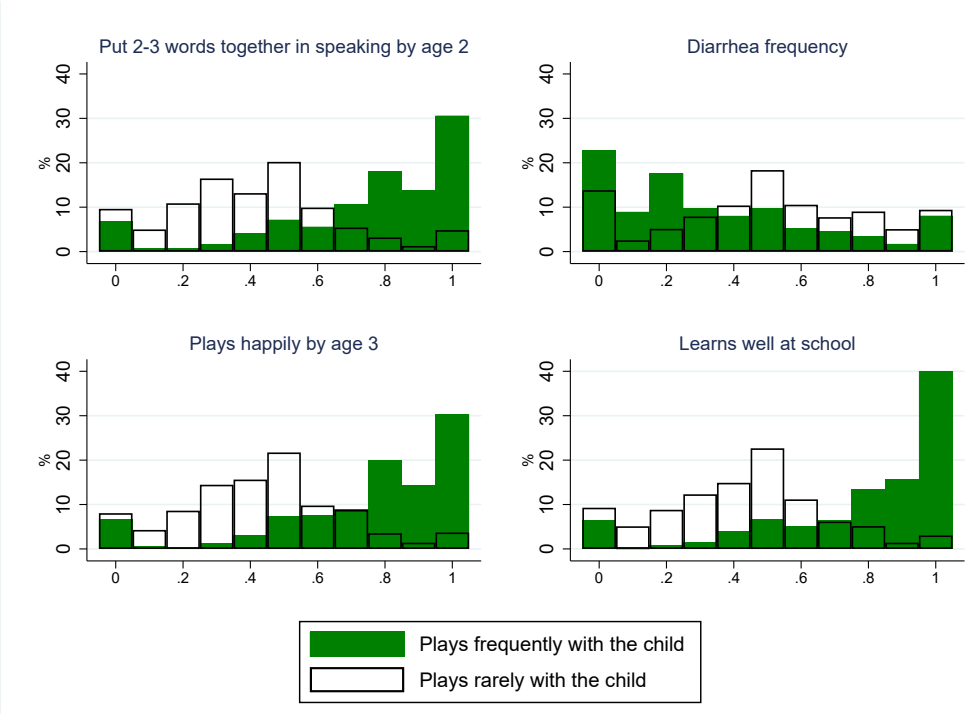
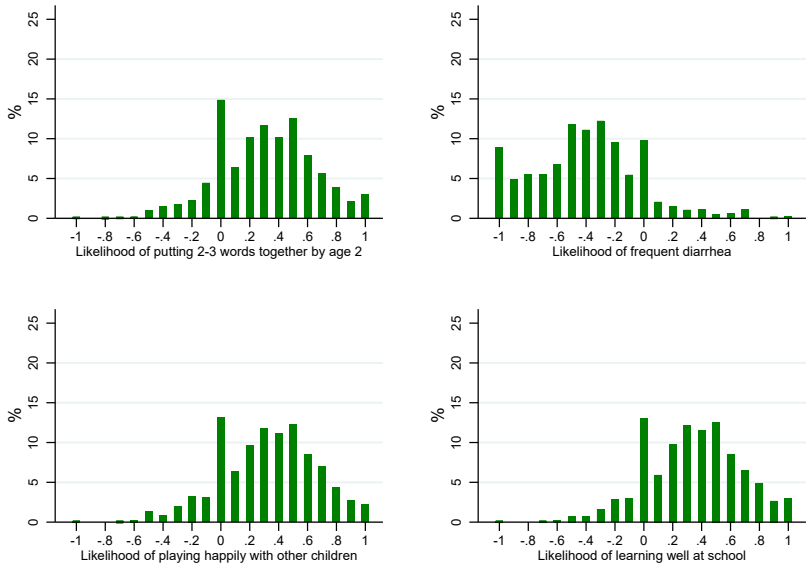
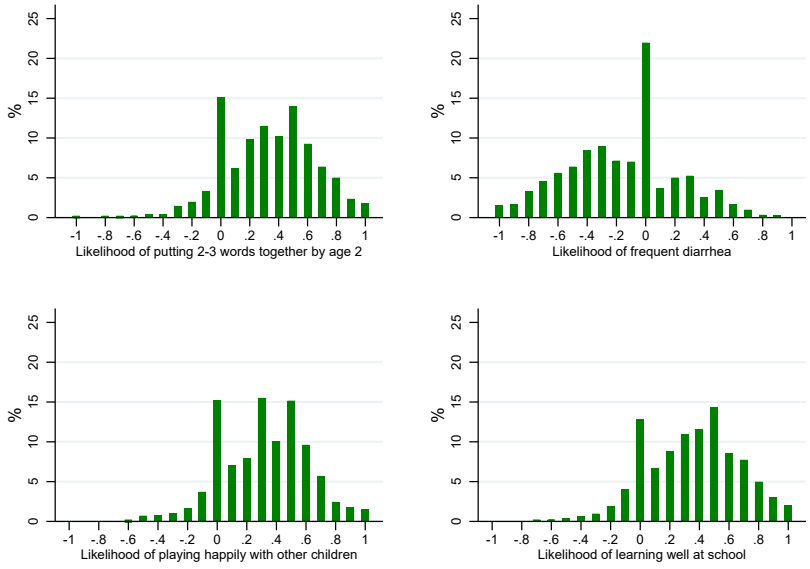


Figure 2a: Expected return from exclusively breastfeeding



Note: Individual differences in the subjective probability of children achieving developmental outcomes when a mother exclusively breastfeeds for 6 months versus if a mother does not exclusively breastfeeds for 6 months.

Figure 2b: Expected return from playing with child



Note: Individual differences in the subjective probability of children achieving developmental outcomes when a mother plays frequently with her child versus if a mother plays rarely with her child.

Figure 3: Distribution of investments' effort cost

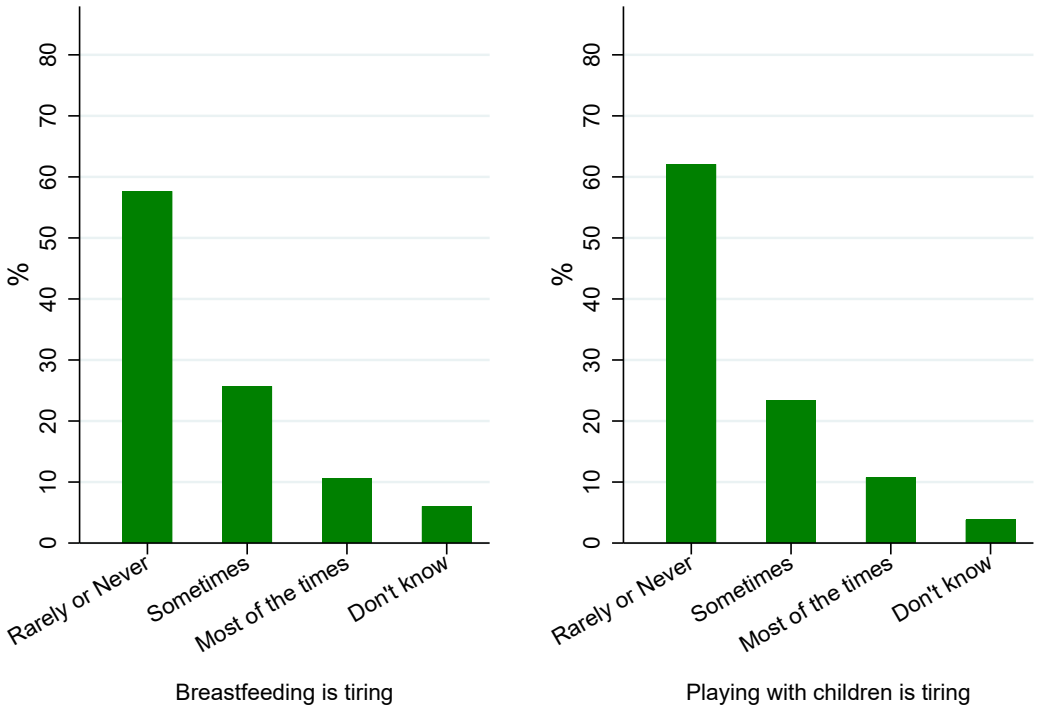


Table 1a: Baseline sample descriptives (mothers' and households' characteristics)

	(1) Non-weighted	(2) Weighted at baseline	(3) Weighted at 3 months	(4) Diff (1)-(2)	(5) Diff (2)-(3)	(6) Diff (1)-(3)
Mothers' age (years)	26.71	26.58	26.65	0.13	−0.07	0.06
	(4.54)	(4.44)	(4.51)	(0.19)	(0.20)	(0.20)
Mother's education (years)	7.70	8.04	8.03	−0.34*	0.00	−0.33*
	(4.48)	(4.45)	(4.48)	(0.19)	(0.20)	(0.20)
Husband's education (years)	8.63	8.83	8.90	−0.20	−0.07	−0.28*
	(3.42)	(3.38)	(3.30)	(0.14)	(0.15)	(0.15)
Parity	2.58	2.48	2.45	0.10*	0.03	0.13**
	(1.51)	(1.46)	(1.43)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.07)
Household's income (US dollars)	214.23	224.58	225.72	−10.35	−1.14	−11.49
	(170.30)	(177.32)	(181.18)	(8.74)	(9.72)	(9.56)
Mother normally works	0.06	0.06	0.06	0.00	0.00	0.00
	(0.24)	(0.24)	(0.23)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Woman is depressed	0.49	0.30	0.30	0.19***	0.00	0.19***
	(0.50)	(0.46)	(0.46)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Depression score	8.67	6.39	6.32	2.28***	0.06	2.35***
	(6.71)	(6.17)	(6.07)	(0.27)	(0.27)	(0.29)
High SES (above median)	0.50	0.54	0.55	−0.04**	−0.01	−0.05**
	(0.50)	(0.50)	(0.50)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Item non-response rate	0.06	0.06	0.06	−0.01	0.00	−0.01
	(0.23)	(0.24)	(0.24)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Mother's education (categorical)						
Education: 0 years	0.15	0.13	0.13	0.02	−0.00	0.01
	(0.35)	(0.34)	(0.34)	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Education: 1-5 years	0.20	0.18	0.18	0.02	−0.00	0.02
	(0.40)	(0.38)	(0.38)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Education: 6-10 years	0.44	0.45	0.45	−0.01	0.00	−0.01
	(0.50)	(0.50)	(0.50)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Education: +10 years	0.22	0.24	0.24	−0.02	−0.00	−0.02
	(0.41)	(0.43)	(0.43)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Parity (categorical)						
Child in womb: 1st	0.29	0.31	0.31	−0.02	−0.00	−0.02
	(0.45)	(0.46)	(0.46)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Child in womb: 2nd	0.26	0.27	0.27	−0.01	−0.00	−0.01
	(0.44)	(0.44)	(0.45)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Child in womb: 3rd or higher	0.45	0.42	0.42	0.03	0.00	0.03
	(0.50)	(0.49)	(0.49)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Stated preferences						
Importance speaking	0.63	0.64	0.63	−0.01	0.00	−0.00
	(0.48)	(0.48)	(0.48)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Importance diarrhea	0.67	0.67	0.66	0.00	0.00	0.01
	(0.47)	(0.47)	(0.47)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Importance playing	0.66	0.67	0.66	−0.01	0.00	−0.00
	(0.47)	(0.47)	(0.47)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Importance learning	0.79	0.80	0.80	−0.01	0.00	−0.01
	(0.41)	(0.40)	(0.40)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Observations	1154	1154	871			

Note: Stated preferences reflect the level of importance that mothers attach to the developmental milestones under study (putting 2-3 words together in speaking by age 2, the frequency of diarrhea episodes, playing happily by age 3, and learning well in school) in promoting a child's development (mentally and physically) in the future, and depict the share of mothers that consider the specific milestone to be important or very important against unimportant, little important, or moderately important.

* $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

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Table 1b: Baseline sample descriptives (beliefs and costs)

	(1) Non-weighted	(2) Weighted at baseline	(3) Weighted at 3 months	(4) Diff (1)-(2)	(5) Diff (2)-(3)	(6) Diff (1)-(3)
Likelihood of putting 2-3 words in speaking by age 2						
If the mother exclusively breastfeeds for 6 months	0.70	0.70	0.70	−0.00	0.00	0.00
	(0.30)	(0.30)	(0.31)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
If the mother does not exclusively breastfeed for 6 months	0.39	0.39	0.39	0.00	0.00	0.00
	(0.25)	(0.25)	(0.25)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
If the mother plays with the child frequently	0.74	0.74	0.73	−0.00	0.01	0.01
	(0.28)	(0.28)	(0.29)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
If the mother plays with the child rarely	0.42	0.41	0.41	0.00	0.00	0.00
	(0.24)	(0.25)	(0.25)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Likelihood of diarrhea episodes						
If the mother exclusively breastfeeds for 6 months	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.00	−0.00	−0.00
	(0.25)	(0.26)	(0.26)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
If the mother does not exclusively breastfeed for 6 months	0.64	0.64	0.64	0.00	0.00	0.00
	(0.30)	(0.30)	(0.31)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
If the mother plays with the child frequently	0.35	0.34	0.35	0.01	−0.01	0.00
	(0.31)	(0.31)	(0.31)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
If the mother plays with the child rarely	0.51	0.50	0.50	0.01	0.00	0.01
	(0.30)	(0.30)	(0.31)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Likelihood of playing happily by age 3						
If the mother exclusively breastfeeds for 6 months	0.73	0.73	0.73	−0.00	0.00	0.00
	(0.28)	(0.28)	(0.29)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
If the mother does not exclusively breastfeed for 6 months	0.41	0.41	0.41	−0.00	0.00	0.00
	(0.25)	(0.26)	(0.26)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
If the mother plays with the child frequently	0.75	0.75	0.75	−0.00	0.01	0.00
	(0.28)	(0.28)	(0.28)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
If the mother plays with the child rarely	0.43	0.43	0.43	−0.00	0.00	0.00
	(0.24)	(0.24)	(0.24)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Likelihood of learning well						
If the mother exclusively breastfeeds for 6 months	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.00	0.00	0.01
	(0.29)	(0.29)	(0.30)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
If the mother does not exclusively breastfeed for 6 months	0.41	0.41	0.41	−0.00	−0.00	−0.00
	(0.24)	(0.24)	(0.25)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
If the mother plays with the child frequently	0.78	0.78	0.77	−0.00	0.01	0.01
	(0.28)	(0.29)	(0.29)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
If the mother plays with the child rarely	0.43	0.43	0.42	0.00	0.00	0.00
	(0.24)	(0.24)	(0.24)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Expected return of breastfeeding						
On speaking	0.30	0.30	0.30	−0.00	−0.00	−0.00
	(0.33)	(0.33)	(0.33)	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.02)
On diarrhea	0.39	0.39	0.39	0.00	0.00	0.00
	(0.37)	(0.38)	(0.38)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
On playing happily	0.32	0.32	0.32	−0.00	0.00	0.00
	(0.33)	(0.33)	(0.33)	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.02)
On learning well	0.34	0.34	0.33	0.00	0.01	0.01
	(0.33)	(0.32)	(0.33)	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Expected return of playing						
On speaking	0.33	0.33	0.32	−0.00	0.01	0.00
	(0.31)	(0.32)	(0.32)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
On diarrhea	0.16	0.16	0.15	−0.00	0.01	0.01
	(0.38)	(0.38)	(0.39)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
On playing happily	0.31	0.32	0.31	−0.00	0.01	0.00
	(0.29)	(0.29)	(0.29)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
On learning well	0.35	0.35	0.34	−0.00	0.01	0.00
	(0.31)	(0.31)	(0.31)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Costs of investments						
Breastfeeding is tiring	0.41	0.39	0.39	0.02	−0.01	0.02
	(0.49)	(0.49)	(0.49)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Playing is tiring	0.38	0.35	0.36	0.02	−0.01	0.02
	(0.49)	(0.48)	(0.48)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Either breastfeeding or playing is tiring	0.51	0.48	0.49	0.03	−0.00	0.02
	(0.50)	(0.50)	(0.50)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Observations	1154	1154	871			

* p < 0.1, ** p < 0.05, *** p < 0.01.

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Table 1c: Follow-up sample descriptives (investments)

	(1) Non-weighted	(2) Weighted at baseline	(3) Weighted at 3 months	(4) Diff (1)-(2)	(5) Diff (2)-(3)	(6) Diff (1)-(3)
Attrition rate	0.23	0.23	0.24	0.00	−0.01	−0.01
	(0.42)	(0.42)	(0.43)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Investments						
Exclusively breastfed last 24 hr	0.48	0.49	0.49	−0.01	−0.00	−0.01
	(0.50)	(0.50)	(0.50)	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Guided play	0.31	0.33	0.33	−0.02	0.00	−0.02
	(0.46)	(0.47)	(0.47)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Joint investments						
Not breastfeeding and not playing	0.37	0.36	0.36	0.01	0.00	0.01
	(0.48)	(0.48)	(0.48)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Breastfeeding and not playing	0.32	0.31	0.32	0.01	−0.00	0.01
	(0.47)	(0.46)	(0.47)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Not breastfeeding and playing	0.15	0.15	0.15	−0.00	0.00	−0.00
	(0.36)	(0.36)	(0.36)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Breastfeeding and playing	0.16	0.18	0.18	−0.02	−0.00	−0.02
	(0.37)	(0.38)	(0.38)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Observations	1154	1154	871			

* $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table 2a: Heterogeneity in expected returns from breastfeeding

	(1) Bf on speaking	(2) Bf on speaking	(3) Bf on diarrhea	(4) Bf on diarrhea	(5) Bf on social	(6) Bf on social	(7) Bf on learning	(8) Bf on learning
Education: 1-5 years	0.094**	0.078**	0.102**	0.085*	0.086**	0.080**	0.108***	0.099**
	(0.037)	(0.037)	(0.047)	(0.044)	(0.038)	(0.039)	(0.037)	(0.037)
Education: 6-10 years	0.083***	0.046	0.143***	0.110***	0.079**	0.060	0.075**	0.054
	(0.030)	(0.032)	(0.041)	(0.040)	(0.039)	(0.042)	(0.035)	(0.038)
Education: +10 years	0.079**	0.026	0.131***	0.082*	0.079**	0.055	0.056	0.025
	(0.034)	(0.036)	(0.039)	(0.044)	(0.037)	(0.044)	(0.034)	(0.038)
Age (years)	0.020	0.015	0.020	0.022	0.015	0.004	0.032*	0.026
	(0.020)	(0.022)	(0.026)	(0.027)	(0.018)	(0.020)	(0.018)	(0.020)
Age squared	−0.000	−0.000	−0.000	−0.000	−0.000	−0.000	−0.001*	−0.001
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
Husband's education (years)		0.001		0.002		0.001		0.002
		(0.004)		(0.004)		(0.004)		(0.004)
Asset-based SES		0.024***		0.017		0.017**		0.016*
		(0.008)		(0.010)		(0.008)		(0.009)
Child in womb: 2nd		0.027		0.011		0.038		0.037
		(0.025)		(0.026)		(0.030)		(0.027)
Child in womb: 3rd or higher		0.040		−0.012		0.078**		0.044
		(0.032)		(0.038)		(0.031)		(0.033)
Woman is depressed		0.013		0.035		0.008		0.017
		(0.021)		(0.025)		(0.021)		(0.024)
Constant	−0.057	0.037	−0.043	−0.079	0.060	0.211	−0.134	−0.053
	(0.289)	(0.325)	(0.354)	(0.371)	(0.264)	(0.275)	(0.255)	(0.268)
Observations	1090	1090	1090	1090	1090	1090	1090	1090
R^2	0.008	0.020	0.017	0.022	0.008	0.019	0.012	0.020

Note: Results estimated with an OLS regression of expected returns from breastfeeding on mothers' characteristics. Bf is short for breastfeeding. Bf on speaking = Expected return from breastfeeding on the probability that a child puts 2-3 together in speaking by age 2; Bf on diarrhea = Expected return from breastfeeding on the probability of lower incidence of diarrhea episodes; Bf on social = Expected return from breastfeeding on the probability that a child plays happily with other children by age 3; Bf on learning = Expected return from breastfeeding on the probability of a child learning well.

* $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$. Robust standard errors in parenthesis, clustered at the village level.

Sample: All mothers.

Table 2b: Heterogeneity in expected returns from playing

	(1) Playing on speaking	(2) Playing on speaking	(3) Playing on diarrhea	(4) Playing on diarrhea	(5) Playing on social	(6) Playing on social	(7) Playing on learning	(8) Playing on learning
Education: 1-5 years	0.108**	0.092**	0.091*	0.080	0.069	0.056	0.078*	0.061
	(0.041)	(0.038)	(0.051)	(0.051)	(0.042)	(0.041)	(0.044)	(0.043)
Education: 6-10 years	0.119***	0.079*	0.060	0.037	0.090**	0.057	0.072*	0.035
	(0.041)	(0.040)	(0.038)	(0.041)	(0.036)	(0.040)	(0.038)	(0.041)
Education: +10 years	0.110***	0.054	0.062	0.021	0.074*	0.024	0.090**	0.034
	(0.038)	(0.043)	(0.043)	(0.052)	(0.037)	(0.044)	(0.039)	(0.049)
Age (years)	0.067***	0.059***	−0.001	0.003	0.029	0.023	0.032*	0.029
	(0.020)	(0.019)	(0.024)	(0.025)	(0.018)	(0.018)	(0.017)	(0.018)
Age squared	−0.001***	−0.001***	0.000	−0.000	−0.001*	−0.000	−0.001*	−0.001*
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
Husband's education (years)		−0.002		0.007*		0.003		0.001
		(0.004)		(0.004)		(0.003)		(0.004)
Asset-based SES		0.029***		0.001		0.018**		0.022***
		(0.007)		(0.011)		(0.008)		(0.008)
Child in womb: 2nd		0.072***		−0.029		0.056**		0.030
		(0.021)		(0.030)		(0.025)		(0.028)
Child in womb: 3rd or higher		0.036		−0.023		0.027		0.011
		(0.025)		(0.037)		(0.028)		(0.031)
Woman is depressed		0.003		0.004		0.005		0.014
		(0.019)		(0.017)		(0.019)		(0.022)
Constant	−0.673**	−0.543*	0.107	0.024	−0.122	−0.056	−0.134	−0.095
	(0.277)	(0.278)	(0.344)	(0.360)	(0.253)	(0.265)	(0.237)	(0.251)
Observations	1090	1090	1090	1090	1090	1090	1090	1090
R^2	0.025	0.046	0.004	0.009	0.013	0.027	0.010	0.021

Note: Results estimated with an OLS regression of expected returns from playing with the child on mothers' characteristics. Playing on speaking = Expected return from playing on the probability that a child puts 2-3 together in speaking by age 2; Playing on diarrhea = Expected return from playing on the probability of lower incidence of diarrhea episodes; Playing on social = Expected return from playing on the probability that a child plays happily with other children by age 3; Playing on learning = Expected return from playing on the probability of a child learning well.

* p < 0.1, ** p < 0.05, *** p < 0.01. Robust standard errors in parenthesis, clustered at the village level.

Sample: All mothers.

Table 3: Effort costs by characteristics

	(1) Breastfeeding is tiring	(2) Breastfeeding is tiring	(3) Playing is tiring	(4) Playing is tiring
Education: 1-5 years	−0.078	−0.041	−0.142**	−0.094*
	(0.061)	(0.061)	(0.057)	(0.055)
Education: 6-10 years	−0.127**	−0.049	−0.212***	−0.107**
	(0.051)	(0.055)	(0.044)	(0.048)
Education: +10 years	−0.161***	−0.054	−0.246***	−0.096
	(0.058)	(0.069)	(0.054)	(0.059)
Age (years)	0.045	0.053	0.068**	0.073**
	(0.031)	(0.032)	(0.030)	(0.031)
Age squared	−0.001	−0.001	−0.001**	−0.001**
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Husband's education (years)		0.008		0.005
		(0.006)		(0.004)
Asset-based SES		−0.044***		−0.058***
		(0.014)		(0.014)
Child in womb: 2nd		−0.008		0.040
		(0.038)		(0.043)
Child in womb: 3rd or higher		0.028		0.019
		(0.036)		(0.039)
Woman is depressed		0.097**		0.080**
		(0.038)		(0.030)
Constant	−0.105	−0.356	−0.406	−0.630
	(0.394)	(0.411)	(0.396)	(0.415)
Observations	1021	1021	1044	1044
R^2	0.012	0.038	0.029	0.063

Note: Results estimated with an OLS regression of expected effort cost of investments on mothers' characteristics.

* $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$. Robust standard errors in parenthesis, clustered at the village level.

Sample: All mothers.

Table 4: Baseline model estimates of the preference and cost parameters

	Speak		Health		Social		Learn		All outcomes	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
ω_speak	0.582**	0.528**							0.234	0.192
	(0.249)	(0.241)							(0.361)	(0.340)
ω_health			0.209	0.195					0.040	0.039
			(0.265)	(0.254)					(0.275)	(0.268)
ω_social					0.401*	0.389			−0.358	−0.289
					(0.224)	(0.245)			(0.353)	(0.367)
ω_learn							0.931***	0.849***	1.003***	0.901***
							(0.229)	(0.241)	(0.333)	(0.345)
Breastfeeding is tiring	0.202	0.213	0.195	0.204	0.201	0.211	0.232*	0.240	0.232*	0.240
	(0.132)	(0.145)	(0.131)	(0.145)	(0.131)	(0.144)	(0.134)	(0.148)	(0.134)	(0.148)
Playing is tiring	−0.690***	−0.610***	−0.722***	−0.638***	−0.703***	−0.621***	−0.674***	−0.596***	−0.675***	−0.597***
	(0.185)	(0.191)	(0.180)	(0.188)	(0.179)	(0.189)	(0.180)	(0.189)	(0.183)	(0.191)
Controls	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
Observations	2504	2504	2504	2504	2504	2504	2504	2504	2504	2504
# mothers	626	626	626	626	626	626	626	626	626	626

Note: Results estimated using a multinomial logit model where mothers' alternatives are: no-bf, no-pl = not breastfeeding and not playing; bf, no-pl = breastfeeding but not playing; no-bf, pl = not breastfeeding but playing; bf, pl = breastfeeding and playing. The model includes a constant and the investment alternatives are evaluated against not breastfeeding and not playing (omitted category). ω_speak = preference parameter for a child being able to put 2-3 words together in speaking by age 2. ω_health = preference parameter for a child not experiencing frequent diarrhea. ω_social = preference parameter for a child playing happily with other children by age 3. ω_learn = preference parameter for a child learning well at school. Controls include the age of the mother and its square, the sex of the index child, 3 levels of parity (first child in womb, second, and third or higher), 4 levels of mother's education (no education, 1-5 years, 6-10 years, and +10 years), husband's education in years, a SES asset-based index, and a dummy for being diagnosed as depressed at baseline. See Table A9 for the coefficients.

* $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$. Robust standard errors in parenthesis, clustered at the village level.

Sample: Excludes depressed mothers in the intervention group.

Table 5: Elasticities of investments to beliefs on learning and to cost of playing

Learn **Investment choice** **(change in %)**	**BF return** **(1 % increase)**	**PL return** **(1 % increase)**	**Joint investments return** **(1 % increase)**	**Not investing return** **(1 % increase)**	**Playing cost** **(1 % increase)**
Pr(No-bf, no-pl)	-0.23	-0.10	-0.12	0.28	0.06
Pr(Bf, no-pl)	0.47	-0.10	-0.12	-0.17	0.06
Pr(No-bf, pl)	-0.23	0.62	-0.12	-0.17	-0.15
Pr(Bf, pl)	-0.23	-0.10	0.62	-0.17	-0.15

Note: Predicted probabilities estimated after a multinomial logit model that evaluates the preference for developmental outcomes jointly and where mothers' alternatives are: no-bf, no-pl = not breastfeeding and not playing; bf, no-pl = breastfeeding but not playing; no-bf, pl = not breastfeeding but playing; bf, pl = breastfeeding and playing. Estimates of the model are shown in Column 10 of Table 4. BF is short for breastfeeding. PL is short for playing.

Table 6: Heterogeneity in the preference parameters

	(1) Depression	(2) Education	(3) SES
ω_speak x 1[Low charac.]	0.101	0.110	0.944*
	(0.431)	(0.374)	(0.511)
ω_speak x 1[High charac.]	0.488	0.559	−0.396
	(0.460)	(0.903)	(0.480)
ω_health x 1[Low charac.]	0.386	−0.271	−0.654
	(0.337)	(0.307)	(0.448)
ω_health x 1[High charac.]	−0.611	0.818	0.597**
	(0.399)	(0.704)	(0.298)
ω_social x 1[Low charac.]	−0.264	−0.235	−0.419
	(0.496)	(0.433)	(0.573)
ω_social x 1[High charac.]	−0.472	−0.569	−0.095
	(0.771)	(0.752)	(0.537)
ω_learn x 1[Low charac.]	0.563	0.846**	0.712
	(0.469)	(0.395)	(0.554)
ω_learn x 1[High charac.]	1.651***	1.383*	0.870*
	(0.574)	(0.768)	(0.470)
Breastfeeding is tiring x 1[Low charac.]	0.156	0.455***	0.312
	(0.199)	(0.163)	(0.252)
Breastfeeding is tiring x 1[High charac.]	0.513**	−0.412	0.146
	(0.212)	(0.302)	(0.206)
Playing is tiring x 1[Low charac.]	−0.450*	−0.439*	−0.845***
	(0.248)	(0.229)	(0.219)
Playing is tiring x 1[High charac.]	−0.973**	−1.043**	−0.423
	(0.437)	(0.421)	(0.258)
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes
p-value: ω_speak[Low charac.] = ω_speak[High charac.]	0.537	0.638	0.062
p-value: ω_health[Low charac.] = ω_health[High charac.]	0.050	0.172	0.016
p-value: ω_social[Low charac.] = ω_social[High charac.]	0.841	0.716	0.695
p-value: ω_learn[Low charac.] = ω_learn[High charac.]	0.169	0.529	0.826
p-value: Bf Tiring[Low charac.] = Bf Tiring[High charac.]	0.219	0.012	0.636
p-value: Pl Tiring[Low charac.] = Pl Tiring[High charac.]	0.346	0.228	0.156
Observations	2504	2504	2504
# mothers	626	626	626

Note: Results estimated using a multinomial logit model where mothers' alternatives are: no-bf, no-pl = not breastfeeding and not playing; bf, no-pl = breastfeeding but not playing; no-bf, pl = not breastfeeding but playing; bf, pl = breastfeeding and playing. The model includes a constant and the investment alternatives are evaluated against not breastfeeding and not playing (omitted category). ω_speak = preference parameter for a child being able to put 2-3 words together in speaking by age 2. ω_health = preference parameter for a child not experiencing frequent diarrhea. ω_social = preference parameter for a child playing happily with other children by age 3. ω_learn = preference parameter for a child learning well at school. Controls include the age of the mother and its square, the sex of the index child, 3 levels of parity (first child in womb, second, and third or higher), 4 levels of mother's education (no education, 1-5 years, 6-10 years, and +10 years), husband's education in years, a SES asset-based index, and a dummy for being diagnosed as depressed at baseline. Column (1) interacts beliefs and costs by depression status (high characteristic = depressed). Column (2) interacts beliefs and costs with education level (high characteristic = +10 years of education). Column (3) interacts beliefs and costs with SES level (high characteristic = SES above median).

* $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$. Robust standard errors in parenthesis, clustered at the village level.

Sample: Excludes depressed mothers in the intervention group.

Table 7: Model estimates of the preference and cost parameters with alternative measures of maternal play

	HOME Score				Stimulation Score				PCA Stimulation items			
	(1) Learn	(2) Learn	(3) All outcomes	(4) All outcomes	(5) Learn	(6) Learn	(7) All outcomes	(8) All outcomes	(9) Learn	(10) Learn	(11) All outcomes	(12) All outcomes
ω_speak			0.138	0.104			0.097	0.100			−0.153	−0.159
			(0.334)	(0.310)			(0.335)	(0.320)			(0.363)	(0.354)
ω_health			−0.144	−0.154			0.132	0.126			0.143	0.152
			(0.270)	(0.277)			(0.243)	(0.254)			(0.276)	(0.282)
ω_social			−0.303	−0.301			−0.334	−0.342			−0.118	−0.094
			(0.349)	(0.362)			(0.378)	(0.393)			(0.363)	(0.370)
ω_learn	0.576**	0.505**	0.720*	0.666*	0.602***	0.602**	0.710**	0.715*	0.693***	0.670***	0.811**	0.773*
	(0.226)	(0.251)	(0.372)	(0.385)	(0.232)	(0.249)	(0.358)	(0.377)	(0.224)	(0.239)	(0.378)	(0.396)
Breastfeeding is tiring	0.205	0.213	0.205	0.214	0.202	0.212	0.202	0.212	0.206	0.224	0.207	0.225
	(0.134)	(0.148)	(0.134)	(0.148)	(0.137)	(0.150)	(0.138)	(0.151)	(0.136)	(0.152)	(0.137)	(0.153)
Playing is tiring	−0.490**	−0.346	−0.495**	−0.353*	−0.502***	−0.447***	−0.506***	−0.450***	−0.396**	−0.340*	−0.403**	−0.344**
	(0.198)	(0.211)	(0.198)	(0.211)	(0.149)	(0.164)	(0.148)	(0.164)	(0.165)	(0.174)	(0.164)	(0.174)
Controls	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
Observations	2504	2504	2504	2504	2504	2504	2504	2504	2504	2504	2504	2504
# mothers	626	626	626	626	626	626	626	626	626	626	626	626

Note: Results estimated using a multinomial logit model where mothers' alternatives are: no-bf, no-pl = not breastfeeding and not playing; bf, no-pl = breastfeeding but not playing; no-bf, pl = not breastfeeding but playing; bf, pl = breastfeeding and playing. The model includes a constant and the investment alternatives are evaluated against not breastfeeding and not playing (omitted category). ω_speak = preference parameter for a child being able to put 2-3 words together in speaking by age 2. ω_health = preference parameter for a child not experiencing frequent diarrhea. ω_social = preference parameter for a child playing happily with other children by age 3. ω_learn = preference parameter for a child learning well at school. Controls include the age of the mother and its square, the sex of the index child, 3 levels of parity (first child in womb, second, and third or higher), 4 levels of mother's education (no education, 1-5 years, 6-10 years, and +10 years), husband's education in years, a SES asset-based index, and a dummy for being diagnosed as depressed at baseline. A mother is considered to be making the playing investment when she scores in the top tertile of: the HOME Score (Columns 1 to 4), the Stimulation Score (Responsivity + Involvement score) (Columns 5 to 8), or the first principal component (PCA) of the Stimulation items (Responsivity and Involvement items) (Columns 9 to 12).

* $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$. Robust standard errors in parenthesis, clustered at the village level.

Sample: Excludes depressed mothers in the intervention group.

Table 8: Policy Simulations

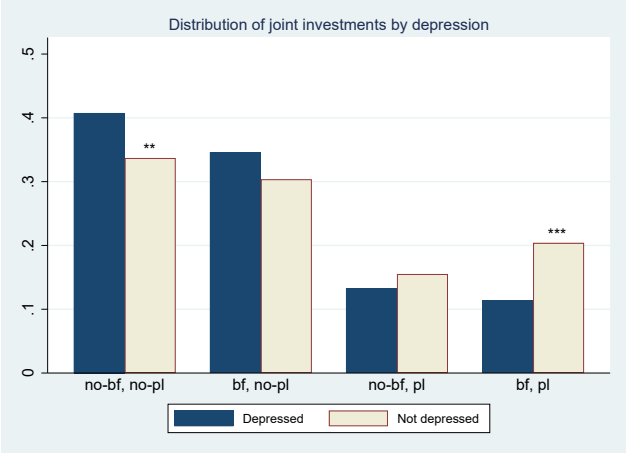
	(0) Baseline Predicted	(1) High SES beliefs	(2) Increase returns (v1)	(3) Increase returns (v2)	(4) Playing not costly	(5) 2 + 4	(6) 3 + 4	(7) Treat depression	(8) Educate women
Pr(No-bf, no-pl)	36.6	36.2	34.8	28.5	34.5	32.8	26.8	34.9	33.6
Pr(Bf, no-pl)	32.0	32.1	32.9	36.2	30.2	31.0	33.9	31.2	32.7
Pr(No-bf, pl)	14.3	14.5	14.7	16.0	16.0	16.4	17.8	14.8	17.4
Pr(Bf, pl)	17.1	17.3	17.6	19.2	19.3	19.8	21.6	19.1	16.3
Pr(Bf)	49.1	49.4	50.5	55.5	49.5	50.8	55.5	50.3	49.0
Pr(Pl)	31.4	31.7	32.3	35.3	35.3	36.2	39.4	33.9	33.7
Δ Pr(No-bf, no-pl)	**0.0**	**-0.4**	**-1.8**	**-8.0**	**-2.0**	**-3.8**	**-9.8**	**-1.6**	**-3.0**
Δ Pr(Bf)	**0.0**	**0.2**	**1.4**	**6.3**	**0.4**	**1.7**	**6.3**	**1.1**	**-0.1**
Δ Pr(Pl)	**0.0**	**0.3**	**0.9**	**3.8**	**3.8**	**4.8**	**7.9**	**2.5**	**2.2**

Note: Predicted probabilities estimated after a multinomial logit model where the preference parameters for children's developmental outcomes are evaluated jointly and where mothers' alternatives are: no-bf, no-pl = not breastfeeding and not playing; bf, no-pl = breastfeeding but not playing; no-bf, pl = not breastfeeding but playing; bf, pl = breastfeeding and playing. Col (0) - Baseline predicted probabilities; Col (1) - Low SES mothers have the beliefs held by the high SES mothers; Col (2) - The probability of children achieving developmental outcomes is increased by 10 pp. Col (3) - The probability of children achieving developmental outcomes is increased by the IQR of the average expected return of single investments (average increase of 43 pp); Col (4) - The effort cost of playing is suppressed; Col (5) - Combines Col (2) and Col (4); Col (6) - Combines Col (3) and Col (4); Col (7) - Depression status is changed to not depressed, and beliefs and costs are set at the value that not depressed mothers have; Col (8) - Education level is set at +10 years of education, and beliefs and costs are set at the value that mothers with +10 years of education have.

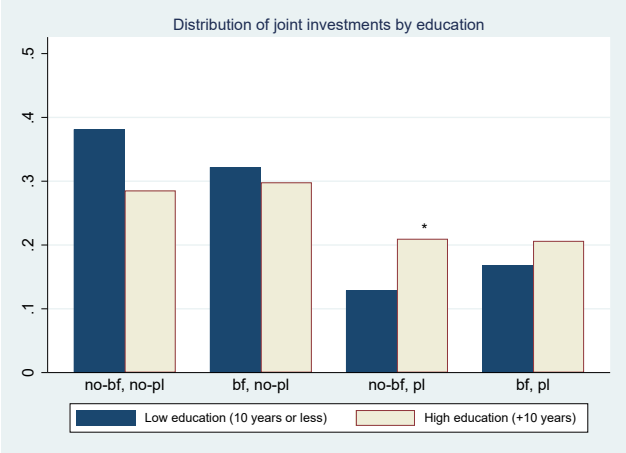
A Appendix Figures and Tables

Figure A1: Joint investments by characteristics

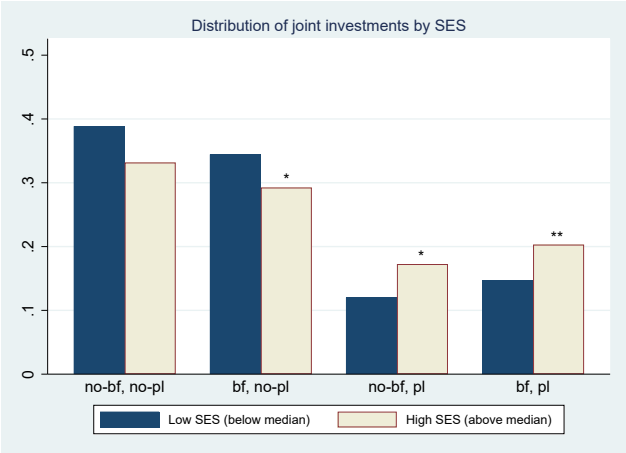
(a) By depression



(b) By education



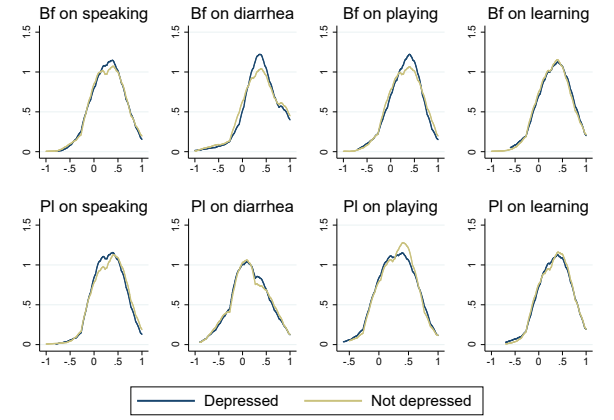
(c) By SES



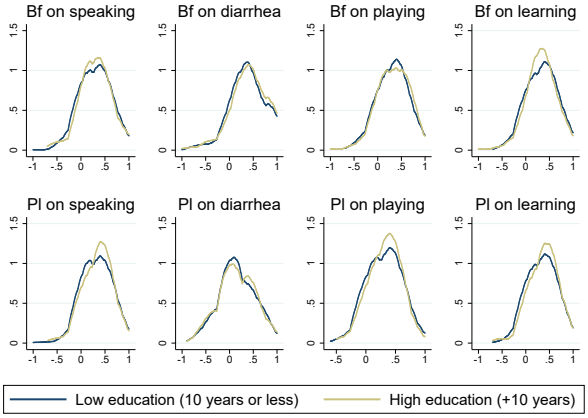
Note: Joint investments: no-bf, no-pl = not breastfeeding and not playing; bf, no-pl = breastfeeding but not playing; no-bf, pl = not breastfeeding but playing; bf, pl = breastfeeding and playing. Statistical difference: * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

Figure A2: Expected returns by characteristics

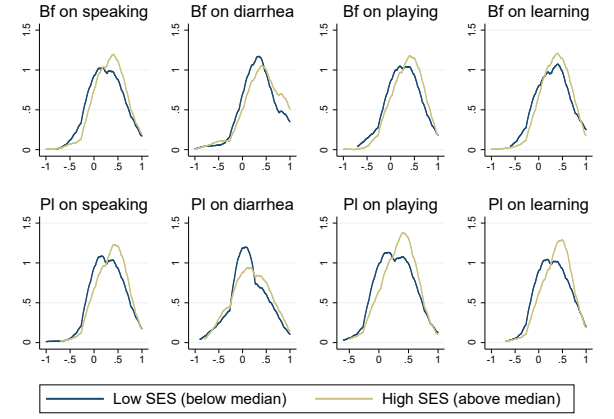
(a) By depression



(b) By education

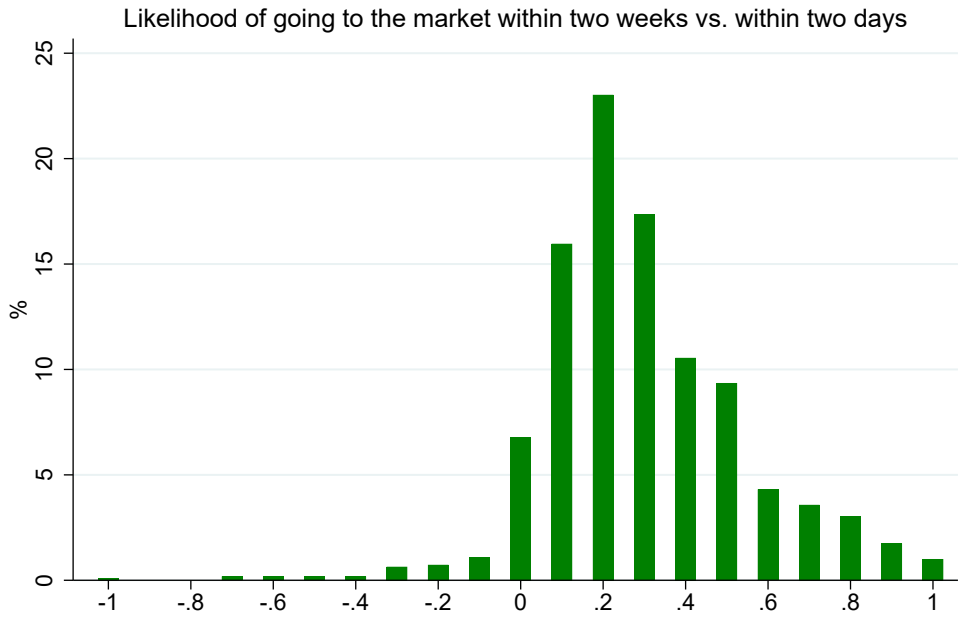


(c) By SES



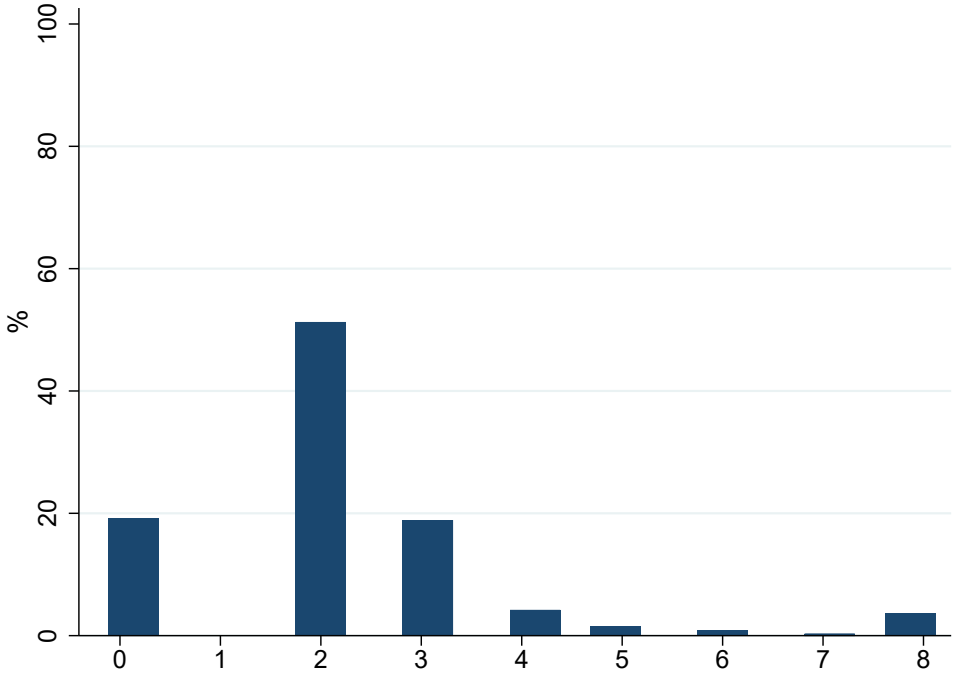
Note: Kernel distribution of individual differences in the subjective probability of children achieving developmental outcomes when a mother makes the high level investment versus when a mother makes the low level investment. Bf is short for breastfeeding. Pl is short for playing.

Figure A3: Test question. Monotonicity property of probability distributions



Note: Individual differences in the probability that a woman would go to the market within the next two weeks versus the probability a woman would go to the market within the next two days. Negative values violate the monotonicity property.

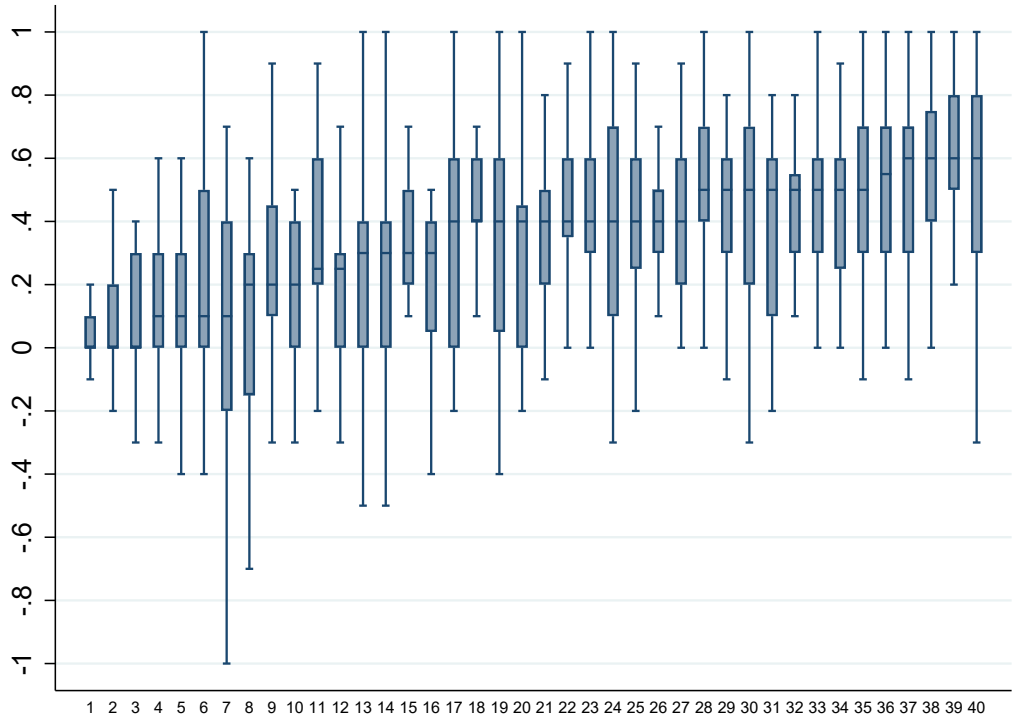
Figure A4: Individual distribution of repeated beliefs



Note: Incidence of repeated combinations of beliefs from low and high investment levels across the different developmental outcomes considered.

Figure A5: Between and within village variation in beliefs, investments, and costs

(a) Variation in beliefs: Expected return of breastfeeding on learning



(b) Variation in investments and costs

SD	**Exclusively breastfeeding**	**Playing**	**Breastfeeding is tiring**	**Playing is tiring**
Overall	0.500	0.468	0.492	0.485
Between	0.152	0.177	0.156	0.196
Within	0.482	0.445	0.471	0.446
Observations	662	662	1021	1044
Clusters	40	40	40	40

Note: (a) Box plot (excluding outliers) of the expected return of breastfeeding on learning well in each of the 40 villages under study.
(b) Within and between village variation in breastfeeding and playing practices, and costs, in the villages under study.

Table A1: Attrition at month 3

	(1) No attrited	(2) Attrited	(3) Diff
Mothers' age (years)	26.59	26.85	−0.27
Mother's education (years)	8.05	7.97	0.08
Husband's education (years)	8.92	8.83	0.09
Parity	2.49	2.35	0.14
Household's income (US dollars)	229.64	214.31	15.33
Mother normally works	0.06	0.06	−0.00
High SES (above median)	0.55	0.56	−0.01
Likelihood of putting 2-3 words in speaking by age 2			
If the mother exclusively breastfeeds for 6 months	0.70	0.68	0.02
If the mother does not exclusively breastfeed for 6 months	0.39	0.40	−0.01
If the mother plays with the child frequently	0.74	0.71	0.03
If the mother plays with the child rarely	0.41	0.42	−0.02
Likelihood of diarrhea episodes			
If the mother exclusively breastfeeds for 6 months	0.24	0.30	−0.06**
If the mother does not exclusively breastfeed for 6 months	0.65	0.62	0.02
If the mother plays with the child frequently	0.35	0.34	0.01
If the mother plays with the child rarely	0.50	0.50	−0.00
Likelihood of playing happily by age 3			
If the mother exclusively breastfeeds for 6 months	0.73	0.72	0.02
If the mother does not exclusively breastfeed for 6 months	0.41	0.43	−0.02
If the mother plays with the child frequently	0.75	0.74	0.01
If the mother plays with the child rarely	0.43	0.45	−0.03
Likelihood of learning well			
If the mother exclusively breastfeeds for 6 months	0.76	0.71	0.05*
If the mother does not exclusively breastfeed for 6 months	0.41	0.42	−0.01
If the mother plays with the child frequently	0.77	0.75	0.02
If the mother plays with the child rarely	0.41	0.46	−0.04**
Costs of investments			
Breastfeeding is tiring	0.39	0.41	−0.02
Playing is tiring	0.35	0.39	−0.04
Either breastfeeding or playing is tiring	0.48	0.52	−0.03
Observations	662	209	

* $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table A2: Feeding practices at 3 months

	(1) All mothers	(2) Breastfeeding but not exclusively	(3) Not breastfeeding
Breast milk	0.930	1.000	0.000
Ghutti	0.024	0.049	0.042
Herbal water (Kehwa/Gripe water)	0.138	0.279	0.242
Water	0.094	0.192	0.149
Tea (Chai)	0.010	0.023	0.000
Formula Milk	0.178	0.321	0.544
Other animal milk (cow/goat/buffalo)	0.183	0.346	0.456
Semi solid food	0.015	0.030	0.023
Solid food	0.007	0.017	0.000
Other	0.017	0.032	0.045
Observations	662	290	46

Sample: Excludes depressed mothers in the intervention group.

Table A3: Heterogeneity in investments

	(1) Exclusively breastfeeding	(2) Exclusively breastfeeding	(3) Playing	(4) Playing	(5) Breastfeeding and Playing	(6) Breastfeeding and Playing
Education: 1-5 years	0.057	0.062	0.054	0.016	0.029	0.012
	(0.051)	(0.051)	(0.072)	(0.071)	(0.046)	(0.044)
Education: 6-10 years	0.004	−0.006	0.006	−0.089	−0.006	−0.063
	(0.048)	(0.054)	(0.060)	(0.073)	(0.046)	(0.053)
Education: +10 years	0.027	0.016	0.133*	−0.018	0.038	−0.051
	(0.057)	(0.072)	(0.067)	(0.093)	(0.052)	(0.063)
Age (years)	0.056	0.037	0.037	0.054	0.046	0.039
	(0.041)	(0.045)	(0.039)	(0.041)	(0.031)	(0.031)
Age squared	−0.001	−0.001	−0.001	−0.001	−0.001	−0.001
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Index child is female	−0.013	−0.012	−0.000	−0.006	−0.001	−0.003
	(0.036)	(0.037)	(0.033)	(0.033)	(0.025)	(0.025)
Husband's education (years)		−0.001		0.006		0.004
		(0.008)		(0.006)		(0.006)
Asset-based SES		0.014		0.031**		0.026**
		(0.016)		(0.015)		(0.012)
Child in womb: 2nd		0.111*		−0.033		0.069*
		(0.058)		(0.054)		(0.038)
Child in womb: 3rd or higher		0.083		−0.111*		0.018
		(0.055)		(0.062)		(0.042)
Woman is depressed		−0.051		−0.088**		−0.081**
		(0.043)		(0.040)		(0.034)
Constant	−0.305	−0.066	−0.214	−0.406	−0.455	−0.362
	(0.551)	(0.621)	(0.511)	(0.550)	(0.426)	(0.449)
Observations	662	662	662	662	662	662
R^2	0.005	0.015	0.015	0.044	0.006	0.033

* p < 0.1, ** p < 0.05, *** p < 0.01. Robust standard errors in parenthesis, clustered at the village level.

Note: Results estimated with an OLS regression of investments on mothers characteristics.

Sample: Excludes depressed mothers in the intervention group.

Table A4a: Heterogeneity in expected returns from breastfeeding: Different depression measures

	(1) Bf on speaking	(2) Bf on speaking	(3) Bf on speaking	(4) Bf on diarrhea	(5) Bf on diarrhea	(6) Bf on diarrhea	(7) Bf on social	(8) Bf on social	(9) Bf on social	(10) Bf on learning	(11) Bf on learning	(12) Bf on learning
Education: 1-5 years	0.078**	0.078**	0.078**	0.087*	0.087*	0.087*	0.080**	0.080**	0.080**	0.100**	0.100**	0.099**
	(0.037)	(0.037)	(0.037)	(0.045)	(0.045)	(0.045)	(0.039)	(0.039)	(0.039)	(0.037)	(0.037)	(0.037)
Education: 6-10 years	0.047	0.046	0.048	0.112***	0.110***	0.111***	0.060	0.060	0.062	0.054	0.053	0.055
	(0.032)	(0.031)	(0.032)	(0.040)	(0.040)	(0.040)	(0.042)	(0.041)	(0.042)	(0.039)	(0.038)	(0.038)
Education: +10 years	0.027	0.026	0.029	0.084*	0.082*	0.085*	0.055	0.055	0.059	0.025	0.025	0.028
	(0.037)	(0.036)	(0.037)	(0.044)	(0.044)	(0.044)	(0.044)	(0.044)	(0.044)	(0.039)	(0.038)	(0.039)
Age (years)	0.015	0.014	0.017	0.022	0.020	0.022	0.004	0.004	0.007	0.026	0.025	0.027
	(0.022)	(0.022)	(0.022)	(0.027)	(0.027)	(0.027)	(0.020)	(0.020)	(0.020)	(0.020)	(0.020)	(0.020)
Age squared	−0.000	−0.000	−0.000	−0.000	−0.000	−0.000	−0.000	−0.000	−0.000	−0.001	−0.001	−0.001
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
Husband's education (years)	0.001	0.001	0.001	0.002	0.002	0.002	0.001	0.001	0.001	0.002	0.001	0.001
	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)
Asset-based SES	0.024***	0.024***	0.026***	0.016	0.016	0.017	0.016*	0.017**	0.019**	0.016*	0.015*	0.017*
	(0.008)	(0.008)	(0.008)	(0.010)	(0.010)	(0.010)	(0.008)	(0.008)	(0.008)	(0.009)	(0.009)	(0.009)
Child in womb: 2nd	0.027	0.027	0.027	0.011	0.012	0.011	0.039	0.038	0.037	0.037	0.038	0.037
	(0.025)	(0.025)	(0.025)	(0.026)	(0.026)	(0.026)	(0.030)	(0.030)	(0.030)	(0.027)	(0.027)	(0.027)
Child in womb: 3rd or higher	0.040	0.040	0.036	−0.012	−0.011	−0.015	0.079**	0.076**	0.071**	0.044	0.044	0.039
	(0.032)	(0.033)	(0.032)	(0.038)	(0.037)	(0.038)	(0.031)	(0.032)	(0.032)	(0.033)	(0.033)	(0.034)
Depression score, 8 cut-off	0.012			0.028			−0.002			0.015		
	(0.020)			(0.025)			(0.023)			(0.023)		
Depression score, 15 cut-off		0.018			0.024			0.024			0.022	
		(0.022)			(0.023)			(0.020)			(0.024)	
Depression score (baseline)			0.003*			0.003			0.003*			0.003*
			(0.001)			(0.002)			(0.002)			(0.002)
Constant	0.036	0.046	−0.001	−0.076	−0.049	−0.093	0.222	0.210	0.157	−0.054	−0.042	−0.092
	(0.319)	(0.317)	(0.322)	(0.373)	(0.370)	(0.373)	(0.277)	(0.267)	(0.278)	(0.270)	(0.263)	(0.271)
Observations	1090	1090	1090	1090	1090	1090	1090	1090	1090	1090	1090	1090
R^2	0.020	0.020	0.022	0.022	0.021	0.023	0.019	0.020	0.022	0.020	0.020	0.022

Note: Results estimated with an OLS regression of expected returns from breastfeeding on mothers' characteristics. Bf on speaking = Expected return from breastfeeding on the probability that a child puts 2-3 together in speaking by age 2; Bf on diarrhea = Expected return from breastfeeding on the probability of lower incidence of diarrhea episodes; Bf on social = Expected return from breastfeeding on the probability that a child plays happily with other children by age 3; Bf on learning = Expected return from breastfeeding on the probability of a child learning well. Depression score is calculated using the patient health questionnaire (PHQ-9), and its value ranges from 0 to 27, where a higher score indicates a higher presence of depression symptoms.

* p < 0.1, ** p < 0.05, *** p < 0.01. Robust standard errors in parenthesis, clustered at the village level.

Sample: All mothers.

Table A4b: Heterogeneity in expected returns from playing: Different depression measures

	(1) Pl on speaking	(2) Pl on speaking	(3) Pl on speaking	(4) Pl on diarrhea	(5) Pl on diarrhea	(6) Pl on diarrhea	(7) Pl on social	(8) Pl on social	(9) Pl on social	(10) Pl on learning	(11) Pl on learning	(12) Pl on learning
Education: 1-5 years	0.092**	0.092**	0.092**	0.081	0.081	0.081	0.056	0.056	0.056	0.061	0.062	0.061
	(0.038)	(0.038)	(0.038)	(0.050)	(0.051)	(0.051)	(0.041)	(0.041)	(0.041)	(0.043)	(0.043)	(0.043)
Education: 6-10 years	0.080*	0.079*	0.080*	0.036	0.038	0.037	0.058	0.057	0.058	0.036	0.034	0.036
	(0.040)	(0.040)	(0.040)	(0.041)	(0.041)	(0.041)	(0.040)	(0.040)	(0.040)	(0.041)	(0.041)	(0.041)
Education: +10 years	0.055	0.054	0.056	0.019	0.021	0.020	0.025	0.025	0.027	0.036	0.034	0.038
	(0.043)	(0.043)	(0.043)	(0.052)	(0.052)	(0.052)	(0.045)	(0.044)	(0.044)	(0.049)	(0.048)	(0.048)
Age (years)	0.060***	0.059***	0.061***	0.001	0.002	0.002	0.023	0.023	0.025	0.030	0.029	0.031*
	(0.019)	(0.020)	(0.019)	(0.025)	(0.025)	(0.026)	(0.018)	(0.018)	(0.018)	(0.018)	(0.018)	(0.018)
Age squared	−0.001***	−0.001***	−0.001***	0.000	−0.000	−0.000	−0.000	−0.000	−0.000	−0.001*	−0.001*	−0.001*
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
Husband's education (years)	−0.002	−0.002	−0.002	0.007*	0.007*	0.007*	0.003	0.003	0.003	0.001	0.001	0.001
	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)
Asset-based SES	0.030***	0.029***	0.030***	−0.001	0.000	0.000	0.018**	0.018**	0.019**	0.022***	0.021***	0.023***
	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.012)	(0.011)	(0.012)	(0.008)	(0.008)	(0.008)	(0.008)	(0.008)	(0.008)
Child in womb: 2nd	0.072***	0.072***	0.072***	−0.028	−0.029	−0.029	0.056**	0.056**	0.055**	0.029	0.030	0.029
	(0.021)	(0.021)	(0.021)	(0.030)	(0.030)	(0.030)	(0.025)	(0.025)	(0.025)	(0.028)	(0.029)	(0.028)
Child in womb: 3rd or higher	0.035	0.035	0.033	−0.021	−0.021	−0.022	0.027	0.026	0.022	0.010	0.010	0.005
	(0.025)	(0.025)	(0.025)	(0.037)	(0.037)	(0.037)	(0.028)	(0.029)	(0.028)	(0.031)	(0.032)	(0.031)
Depression score, 8 cut-off	0.014			−0.021			0.009			0.024		
	(0.018)			(0.021)			(0.018)			(0.019)		
Depression score, 15 cut-off		0.013			−0.015			0.013			0.021	
		(0.021)			(0.020)			(0.022)			(0.026)	
Depression score (baseline)			0.001			−0.001			0.002*			0.003**
			(0.001)			(0.002)			(0.001)			(0.001)
Constant	−0.557*	−0.545*	−0.570**	0.057	0.035	0.039	−0.063	−0.056	−0.098	−0.111	−0.087	−0.143
	(0.276)	(0.279)	(0.280)	(0.361)	(0.361)	(0.366)	(0.263)	(0.259)	(0.267)	(0.252)	(0.247)	(0.257)
Observations	1090	1090	1090	1090	1090	1090	1090	1090	1090	1090	1090	1090
R^2	0.047	0.046	0.047	0.009	0.009	0.009	0.027	0.027	0.029	0.021	0.021	0.024

Note: Results estimated with an OLS regression of expected returns from playing with the child on mothers' characteristics. Pl on speaking = Expected return from playing on the probability that a child puts 2-3 together in speaking by age 2; Pl on diarrhea = Expected return from playing on the probability of lower incidence of diarrhea episodes; Pl on social = Expected return from playing on the probability that a child plays happily with other children by age 3; Pl on learning = Expected return from playing on the probability of a child learning well. Depression score is calculated using the patient health questionnaire (PHQ-9), and its value ranges from 0 to 27, where a higher score indicates a higher presence of depression symptoms.

* p < 0.1, ** p < 0.05, *** p < 0.01. Robust standard errors in parenthesis, clustered at the village level.

Sample: All mothers.

Table A5: Mother's characteristics and expected zero returns

	(1) Only one expected null return	(2) Two to three expected null returns	(3) Four to eight expected null returns	(4) More than one expected negative returns
Education: 1-5 years	0.026	−0.028	−0.060*	−0.112**
	(0.040)	(0.033)	(0.032)	(0.052)
Education: 6-10 years	−0.038	0.041	−0.067*	−0.046
	(0.036)	(0.033)	(0.035)	(0.052)
Education: +10 years	−0.032	0.055	−0.065	−0.007
	(0.051)	(0.043)	(0.038)	(0.059)
Age (years)	0.010	−0.013	−0.002	−0.040
	(0.031)	(0.022)	(0.020)	(0.028)
Age squared	−0.000	0.000	0.000	0.001
	(0.001)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.001)
Husband's education (years)	0.004	−0.004	−0.004	−0.004
	(0.003)	(0.004)	(0.003)	(0.006)
Asset-based SES	−0.002	−0.033***	−0.008	−0.032***
	(0.010)	(0.008)	(0.008)	(0.011)
Child in womb: 2nd	0.013	−0.011	−0.022	−0.010
	(0.036)	(0.023)	(0.026)	(0.036)
Child in womb: 3rd or higher	−0.008	−0.024	−0.026	−0.032
	(0.038)	(0.024)	(0.029)	(0.032)
Woman is depressed	−0.003	−0.015	−0.036	−0.011
	(0.029)	(0.021)	(0.023)	(0.021)
Constant	0.013	0.309	0.252	0.844**
	(0.415)	(0.281)	(0.278)	(0.371)
Mean depvar	0.190	0.130	0.107	0.215
Observations	1090	1090	1090	1090
R^2	0.005	0.024	0.014	0.025

Note: Results estimated with an OLS regression of the incidence of expected null returns from investments on mothers' characteristics (Columns 1 to 3), and of the incidence of expected negative returns on mothers' characteristics (Column 4).

* $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$. Robust standard errors in parenthesis, clustered at the village level.

Sample: All mothers.

Table A6: Calibration of beliefs

In sample expected likelihood of frequent diarrhea episodes	%
If the mother exclusively breastfeeds for 6 months	25.2
If the mother does not exclusively breastfeed for 6 months	64.4
If the mother plays with the child frequently	35.3
If the mother plays with the child rarely	51.0

Proportion of children with diarrhea in the last 2 weeks according to 2012-2013 Pakistan DHS	%
$<$ 6 months old	25.8
6-11 months old	35.3
12-23 months old	32.9

In sample expected likelihood of putting 2-3 words together by age 2	%
If the mother exclusively breastfeeds for 6 months	69.8
If the mother does not exclusively breastfeed for 6 months	39.5
If the mother plays with the child frequently	74.1
If the mother plays with the child rarely	41.5

Proportion of children that speak partial sentences by age 2	%
In the US according to Cunha et al. (2020)	72.0

Table A7: Effort cost by characteristics

	Depression		**Education**		**SES**	
	Yes	No	Low	High	Low	High
Breastfeeding is tiring						
Rarely or never	0.49	0.62	0.57	0.61	0.51	0.63
Sometimes	0.30	0.24	0.27	0.23	0.30	0.22
Most of the time	0.15	0.09	0.11	0.09	0.13	0.08
Don't know	0.07	0.06	0.05	0.08	0.06	0.06
Playing is tiring						
Rarely or never	0.53	0.66	0.60	0.68	0.52	0.71
Sometimes	0.27	0.22	0.25	0.19	0.29	0.18
Most of the time	0.15	0.09	0.11	0.09	0.13	0.09
Don't know	0.05	0.03	0.04	0.04	0.05	0.03
Observations	547	543	854	236	548	542

Note: Depressed = PHQ-9 questionnaire score 10 or above. Not depressed = PHQ-9 questionnaire score below 10. Low education = 10 years or less of education. High education = + 10 years of education. Low SES = SES asset-based index below the median. High SES = SES asset-based index above the median.

Sample: All mothers.

Table A8: Correlation of beliefs and costs

	(1) Bf on speaking	(2) Bf on speaking	(3) Bf on diarrhea	(4) Bf on diarrhea	(5) Bf on social	(6) Bf on social	(7) Bf on learning	(8) Bf on learning	(9) Pl on speaking	(10) Pl on speaking	(11) Pl on diarrhea	(12) Pl on diarrhea	(13) Pl on social	(14) Pl on social	(15) Pl on learning	(16) Pl on learning
Bf sometimes tiring	0.111***	0.104***	0.052	0.038	0.121***	0.119***	0.103***	0.103***								
	(0.032)	(0.029)	(0.044)	(0.043)	(0.036)	(0.036)	(0.031)	(0.030)								
Bf most of the times tiring	0.080**	0.080**	0.056	0.052	0.071*	0.074**	0.028	0.030								
	(0.038)	(0.037)	(0.050)	(0.049)	(0.036)	(0.036)	(0.034)	(0.034)								
Pl sometimes tiring									0.097**	0.093**	0.169***	0.159***	0.153***	0.147***	0.193***	0.190***
									(0.042)	(0.044)	(0.035)	(0.034)	(0.030)	(0.029)	(0.035)	(0.034)
Pl most of the times tiring									0.058	0.057	0.057	0.056	0.032	0.030	0.035	0.034
									(0.047)	(0.048)	(0.040)	(0.041)	(0.040)	(0.041)	(0.045)	(0.045)
Education: 1-5 years		0.072*		0.084*		0.073*		0.093**		0.071		0.073**		0.038		0.040
		(0.037)		(0.044)		(0.038)		(0.036)		(0.052)		(0.036)		(0.039)		(0.042)
Education: 6-10 years		0.039		0.109**		0.051		0.046		0.029		0.060		0.038		0.012
		(0.030)		(0.041)		(0.039)		(0.036)		(0.041)		(0.036)		(0.037)		(0.036)
Education: +10 years		0.022		0.081*		0.050		0.020		0.016		0.042		0.012		0.018
		(0.034)		(0.044)		(0.041)		(0.037)		(0.050)		(0.038)		(0.040)		(0.044)
Age (years)		0.013		0.022		0.002		0.026		0.005		0.063***		0.027		0.036*
		(0.024)		(0.027)		(0.021)		(0.021)		(0.025)		(0.020)		(0.019)		(0.018)
Age squared		−0.000		−0.000		−0.000		−0.001		−0.000		−0.001***		−0.001		−0.001**
		(0.000)		(0.000)		(0.000)		(0.000)		(0.000)		(0.000)		(0.000)		(0.000)
Husband's education (years)		0.001		0.002		0.001		0.002		0.007*		−0.001		0.003		0.002
		(0.004)		(0.004)		(0.004)		(0.004)		(0.004)		(0.004)		(0.003)		(0.004)
Asset-based SES		0.022***		0.017*		0.014		0.012		−0.003		0.019***		0.008		0.010
		(0.007)		(0.010)		(0.009)		(0.009)		(0.011)		(0.007)		(0.008)		(0.008)
Child in womb: 2nd		0.019		0.011		0.027		0.029		−0.035		0.062***		0.048*		0.023
		(0.025)		(0.027)		(0.032)		(0.027)		(0.030)		(0.021)		(0.025)		(0.030)
Child in womb: 3rd or higher		0.036		−0.011		0.072**		0.040		−0.029		0.025		0.017		0.001
		(0.031)		(0.039)		(0.032)		(0.033)		(0.036)		(0.024)		(0.028)		(0.030)
Woman is depressed		0.021		0.036		0.018		0.027		0.012		0.019		0.019		0.032
		(0.021)		(0.025)		(0.021)		(0.023)		(0.018)		(0.019)		(0.019)		(0.022)
Constant	0.220***	−0.007	0.344***	−0.112	0.233***	0.164	0.272***	−0.111	0.085**	−0.066	0.219***	−0.683**	0.220***	−0.193	0.227***	−0.294
	(0.032)	(0.347)	(0.043)	(0.378)	(0.037)	(0.283)	(0.030)	(0.272)	(0.033)	(0.357)	(0.032)	(0.280)	(0.028)	(0.276)	(0.033)	(0.250)
Observations	1090	1090	1090	1090	1090	1090	1090	1090	1090	1090	1090	1090	1090	1090	1090	1090
R^2	0.016	0.032	0.002	0.024	0.022	0.038	0.020	0.037	0.010	0.018	0.073	0.102	0.075	0.089	0.090	0.100

Note: Results estimated with an OLS regression of expected returns from investments on the expected effort cost of investments and mothers characteristics. Bf on speaking = Expected return from breastfeeding on the probability that a child puts 2-3 together in speaking by age 2; Bf on diarrhea = Expected return from breastfeeding on the probability of lower incidence of diarrhea episodes; Bf on social = Expected return from breastfeeding on the probability that a child plays happily with other children by age 3; Bf on learning = Expected return from breastfeeding on the probability of a child learning well. Pl on speaking = Expected return from playing on the probability that a child puts 2-3 together in speaking by age 2; Pl on diarrhea = Expected return from playing on the probability of lower incidence of diarrhea episodes; Pl on social = Expected return from playing on the probability that a child plays happily with other children by age 3; Pl on learning = Expected return from playing on the probability of a child learning well.

* $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$. Robust standard errors in parenthesis, clustered at the village level.

Sample: All mothers.

Table A9: Baseline model estimates of the effect of characteristics on the choice of investments

	(1) Speak	(2) Health	(3) Social	(4) Learn	(5) All outcomes
bf, no-pl					
Education: 1-5 years	0.345	0.380	0.346	0.308	0.318
	(0.300)	(0.302)	(0.303)	(0.304)	(0.308)
Education: 6-10 years	0.195	0.219	0.189	0.168	0.180
	(0.280)	(0.281)	(0.283)	(0.285)	(0.295)
Education: +10 years	0.350	0.387	0.342	0.314	0.331
	(0.304)	(0.300)	(0.317)	(0.315)	(0.331)
Child in womb: 2nd	0.202	0.214	0.206	0.168	0.167
	(0.324)	(0.321)	(0.321)	(0.327)	(0.331)
Child in womb: 3rd or higher	0.134	0.158	0.125	0.104	0.116
	(0.237)	(0.234)	(0.240)	(0.227)	(0.233)
Index child is female	−0.019	−0.040	−0.033	−0.030	−0.028
	(0.163)	(0.163)	(0.161)	(0.163)	(0.165)
Age (years)	0.164	0.180	0.179	0.158	0.152
	(0.259)	(0.255)	(0.260)	(0.261)	(0.258)
Age squared	−0.003	−0.003	−0.003	−0.003	−0.002
	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.005)
Asset-based SES	−0.002	0.004	−0.001	−0.000	0.001
	(0.095)	(0.094)	(0.094)	(0.093)	(0.094)
Husband's education (years)	−0.016	−0.017	−0.015	−0.015	−0.016
	(0.042)	(0.042)	(0.042)	(0.042)	(0.042)
Woman is depressed	−0.093	−0.088	−0.092	−0.086	−0.084
	(0.187)	(0.192)	(0.190)	(0.186)	(0.184)
no-bf, pl					
Education: 1-5 years	0.032	0.064	0.037	−0.005	0.001
	(0.533)	(0.532)	(0.534)	(0.538)	(0.537)
Education: 6-10 years	−0.365	−0.341	−0.368	−0.384	−0.374
	(0.532)	(0.528)	(0.534)	(0.535)	(0.535)
Education: +10 years	0.173	0.189	0.155	0.128	0.144
	(0.554)	(0.553)	(0.557)	(0.560)	(0.555)
Child in womb: 2nd	−0.568	−0.528	−0.551	−0.546	−0.544
	(0.369)	(0.371)	(0.370)	(0.373)	(0.366)
Child in womb: 3rd or higher	−1.108***	−1.076***	−1.104***	−1.094***	−1.086***
	(0.349)	(0.353)	(0.352)	(0.358)	(0.350)
Index child is female	0.087	0.069	0.078	0.072	0.072
	(0.263)	(0.262)	(0.262)	(0.263)	(0.262)
Age (years)	0.242	0.283	0.281	0.242	0.225
	(0.347)	(0.346)	(0.347)	(0.349)	(0.345)
Age squared	−0.003	−0.004	−0.004	−0.003	−0.003
	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.006)
Asset-based SES	0.073	0.084	0.082	0.074	0.070
	(0.106)	(0.105)	(0.107)	(0.105)	(0.103)
Husband's education (years)	0.003	0.002	0.002	0.005	0.006
	(0.055)	(0.055)	(0.055)	(0.055)	(0.056)
Woman is depressed	−0.230	−0.221	−0.228	−0.227	−0.226
	(0.254)	(0.256)	(0.257)	(0.259)	(0.258)
bf, pl					
Education: 1-5 years	−0.097	−0.070	−0.090	−0.134	−0.132
	(0.388)	(0.390)	(0.390)	(0.389)	(0.392)
Education: 6-10 years	−0.613	−0.600	−0.618	−0.631	−0.622
	(0.422)	(0.428)	(0.419)	(0.420)	(0.429)
Education: +10 years	−0.378	−0.360	−0.390	−0.403	−0.389
	(0.523)	(0.517)	(0.519)	(0.524)	(0.529)
Child in womb: 2nd	0.331	0.348	0.331	0.322	0.326
	(0.343)	(0.341)	(0.342)	(0.345)	(0.346)
Child in womb: 3rd or higher	−0.064	−0.042	−0.081	−0.064	−0.044
	(0.384)	(0.383)	(0.382)	(0.381)	(0.379)
Index child is female	−0.033	−0.058	−0.048	−0.046	−0.042
	(0.205)	(0.203)	(0.204)	(0.204)	(0.205)
Age (years)	0.322	0.350	0.354	0.314	0.299
	(0.280)	(0.275)	(0.275)	(0.279)	(0.280)
Age squared	−0.006	−0.006	−0.006	−0.005	−0.005
	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.005)
Asset-based SES	0.201**	0.214**	0.208**	0.203**	0.202**
	(0.100)	(0.101)	(0.100)	(0.100)	(0.100)
Husband's education (years)	0.022	0.022	0.022	0.024	0.024
	(0.048)	(0.048)	(0.048)	(0.048)	(0.047)
Woman is depressed	−0.563*	−0.557*	−0.567*	−0.575*	−0.570*
	(0.297)	(0.296)	(0.298)	(0.302)	(0.301)
Observations	2504	2504	2504	2504	2504
# mothers	626	626	626	626	626

Note: Results estimated using a multinomial logit model where mothers' alternatives are: no-bf, no-pl = not breastfeeding and not playing; bf, no-pl = breastfeeding but not playing; no-bf, pl = not breastfeeding but playing; bf, pl = breastfeeding and playing. The model includes a constant and the investment alternatives are evaluated against not breastfeeding and not playing (omitted category). Speak = when estimating the preference parameter for a child being able to put 2-3 words together in speaking by age 2. Health = when estimating the preference parameter for a child not experiencing frequent diarrhea. Social = when estimating the preference parameter for a child playing happily with other children by age 3. Learn = when estimating the preference parameter for a child learning well at school. All outcomes = when estimating all preference parameters simultaneously. Other coefficients are presented in Table 5.

* $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$. Robust standard errors in parenthesis, clustered at the village level.

Sample: Excludes depressed mothers in the intervention group.

Table A10: Goodness of fit: Observed and predicted distribution of investments

	All mothers		**Depressed**		**Low educated**		**Low SES**		**At least two expected 0 returns**		**Any investment has high cost**	
	Observed	Predicted	Observed	Predicted	Observed	Predicted	Observed	Predicted	Observed	Predicted	Observed	Predicted
Pr(No-bf, no-pl)	36.56	36.56	41.18	41.18	38.53	38.53	40.11	40.05	42.78	42.32	34.18	39.92
Pr(Bf, no-pl)	32.00	32.00	34.80	34.80	32.91	32.91	35.11	34.64	31.93	30.84	38.95	36.48
Pr(No-bf, pl)	14.30	14.30	12.25	12.25	12.34	12.34	10.80	11.82	10.25	12.53	9.43	9.76
Pr(Bf, pl)	17.14	17.14	11.76	11.76	16.22	16.22	13.98	13.48	15.04	14.30	17.45	13.83
Pr(Bf)	**49.14**	**49.14**	**46.57**	**46.57**	**49.13**	**49.13**	**49.09**	**48.13**	**46.97**	**45.15**	**56.40**	**50.32**
Pr(Pl)	**31.44**	**31.44**	**24.02**	**24.02**	**28.56**	**28.56**	**24.78**	**25.30**	**25.29**	**26.83**	**26.88**	**23.60**

Note: Observed and predicted probabilities estimated after a multinomial logit model where the preference parameters for children's developmental outcomes are evaluated jointly and where mothers' alternatives are: no-bf, no-pl = not breastfeeding and not playing; bf, no-pl = breastfeeding but not playing; no-bf, pl = not breastfeeding but playing; bf, pl = breastfeeding and playing. Depressed = PHQ-9 questionnaire score 10 or above. Low educated = 10 years or less of education. Low SES = SES asset-based index below the median.

Table A11: Mixed logit model

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
ω_speak	0.489*				0.158
	(0.251)				(0.374)
ω_health		0.306			0.162
		(0.455)			(0.442)
ω_social			0.361		−0.329
			(0.248)		(0.385)
ω_learn				0.873***	1.012***
				(0.247)	(0.369)
Breastfeeding is tiring	0.201	0.202	0.200	0.231	0.243
	(0.143)	(0.152)	(0.144)	(0.147)	(0.156)
Playing is tiring	−0.599***	−0.644***	−0.608***	−0.581***	−0.606***
	(0.191)	(0.214)	(0.188)	(0.190)	(0.208)
SD					
ω_speak	0.088				0.020
	(0.125)				(0.283)
ω_health		1.210			1.258
		(2.070)			(1.921)
ω_social			0.152		0.476
			(0.381)		(1.834)
ω_learn				0.163	0.104
				(0.778)	(0.257)
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	2504	2504	2504	2504	2504
# mothers	626	626	626	626	626

Note: Results estimated using a mixed logit model where mothers' alternatives are: no-bf, no-pl = not breastfeeding and not playing; bf, no-pl = breastfeeding but not playing; no-bf, pl = not breastfeeding but playing; bf, pl = breastfeeding and playing. The model includes a constant and the investment alternatives are evaluated against not breastfeeding and not playing (omitted category). ω_speak = preference parameter for a child being able to put 2-3 words together in speaking by age 2. ω_health = preference parameter for a child not experiencing frequent diarrhea. ω_social = preference parameter for a child playing happily with other children by age 3. ω_learn = preference parameter for a child learning well at school. Controls include the age of the mother and its square, the sex of the index child, parity, mother's education in years, husband's education in years, a SES asset-based index, and a dummy for being diagnosed as depressed at baseline.

* $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$. Robust standard errors in parenthesis, clustered at the village level.

Sample: Excludes depressed mothers in the intervention group.

Table A12: Heterogeneity in stated preferences

	(1) Importance speaking	(2) Importance speaking	(3) Importance diarrhea	(4) Importance diarrhea	(5) Importance playing	(6) Importance playing	(7) Importance learning	(8) Importance learning
Education: 1-5 years	0.029	0.044	0.049	0.048	−0.024	−0.018	−0.000	−0.007
	(0.053)	(0.054)	(0.051)	(0.054)	(0.045)	(0.045)	(0.042)	(0.043)
Education: 6-10 years	−0.035	−0.006	0.124***	0.125**	−0.016	−0.009	0.010	−0.007
	(0.051)	(0.056)	(0.044)	(0.057)	(0.052)	(0.055)	(0.044)	(0.046)
Education: +10 years	0.034	0.073	0.135**	0.133*	0.009	0.018	0.040	0.009
	(0.054)	(0.062)	(0.052)	(0.072)	(0.049)	(0.054)	(0.046)	(0.053)
Age (years)	−0.015	−0.013	0.066*	0.070*	0.031	0.030	0.028	0.033
	(0.037)	(0.038)	(0.035)	(0.037)	(0.030)	(0.029)	(0.031)	(0.029)
Age squared	0.000	0.000	−0.001	−0.001	−0.001	−0.001	−0.000	−0.001
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Husband's education (years)		0.002		0.003		0.001		0.004
		(0.006)		(0.006)		(0.005)		(0.005)
Asset-based SES		−0.024*		−0.004		−0.009		−0.004
		(0.012)		(0.010)		(0.010)		(0.009)
Child in womb: 2nd		−0.050		−0.016		−0.012		−0.051
		(0.045)		(0.042)		(0.044)		(0.040)
Child in womb: 3rd or higher		−0.011		−0.018		−0.009		−0.048
		(0.039)		(0.040)		(0.038)		(0.036)
Woman is depressed		−0.043		0.032		−0.038		−0.047
		(0.035)		(0.027)		(0.027)		(0.029)
Constant	0.812	0.777	−0.412	−0.505	0.284	0.285	0.397	0.331
	(0.492)	(0.511)	(0.476)	(0.498)	(0.402)	(0.395)	(0.435)	(0.404)
Observations	1090	1090	1090	1090	1090	1090	1090	1090
R^2	0.005	0.011	0.018	0.020	0.002	0.004	0.003	0.010

Note: Results estimated with an OLS regression. The dependent variable is a binary variable equal to 1 when the mother states the outcome to be very important for a child's development.

* p < 0.1, ** p < 0.05, *** p < 0.01. Robust standard errors in parenthesis, clustered at the village level.

Sample: All mothers.

Table A13: Heterogeneity in the preference parameters by constraint levels

	(1) Female Child	(2) Grandmother	(3) Agricultural household
ω_speak x 1[Constrained]	0.109	0.450	−0.073
	(0.575)	(0.719)	(0.524)
ω_speak x 1[No constrained]	0.240	0.097	0.515
	(0.448)	(0.403)	(0.589)
ω_health x 1[Constrained]	0.080	−0.899	0.244
	(0.403)	(0.580)	(0.339)
ω_health x 1[No constrained]	0.042	0.377	−0.107
	(0.329)	(0.319)	(0.416)
ω_social x 1[Constrained]	0.059	0.023	−0.203
	(0.689)	(0.644)	(0.535)
ω_social x 1[No constrained]	−0.519	−0.260	−0.223
	(0.397)	(0.455)	(0.721)
ω_learn x 1[Constrained]	0.651	0.996	1.456***
	(0.506)	(0.738)	(0.492)
ω_learn x 1[No constrained]	1.095**	0.750*	0.159
	(0.459)	(0.443)	(0.501)
Breastfeeding is tiring x 1[Constrained]	0.093	0.038	0.096
	(0.279)	(0.242)	(0.234)
Breastfeeding is tiring x 1[No constrained]	0.374*	0.347*	0.405*
	(0.214)	(0.193)	(0.214)
Playing is tiring x 1[Constrained]	−0.476*	−0.833**	−0.300
	(0.285)	(0.377)	(0.231)
Playing is tiring x 1[No constrained]	−0.693***	−0.529**	−1.082***
	(0.225)	(0.218)	(0.290)
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes
p-value: ω_speak[Constr.] = ω_speak[No constr.]	0.861	0.675	0.497
p-value: ω_health[Constr.] = ω_health[No constr.]	0.938	0.061	0.506
p-value: ω_social[Constr.] = ω_social[No constr.]	0.445	0.727	0.984
p-value: ω_learn[Constr.] = ω_learn[No constr.]	0.512	0.789	0.078
p-value: Bf Tiring[Constr.] = Bf Tiring[No constr.]	0.477	0.324	0.368
p-value: Pl Tiring[Constr.] = Pl Tiring[No constr.]	0.504	0.473	0.022
Observations	2504	2504	2504
# mothers	626	626	626

Note: Results estimated using a multinomial logit model where mothers' alternatives are: no-bf, no-pl = not breastfeeding and not playing; bf, no-pl = breastfeeding but not playing; no-bf, pl = not breastfeeding but playing; bf, pl = breastfeeding and playing. The model includes a constant and the investment alternatives are evaluated against not breastfeeding and not playing (omitted category). ω_speak = preference parameter for a child being able to put 2-3 words together in speaking by age 2. ω_health = preference parameter for a child not experiencing frequent diarrhea. ω_social = preference parameter for a child playing happily with other children by age 3. ω_learn = preference parameter for a child learning well at school. Controls include the age of the mother and its square, the sex of the index child, 3 levels of parity (first child in womb, second, and third or higher), 4 levels of mother's education (no education, 1-5 years, 6-10 years, and +10 years), husband's education in years, a SES asset-based index, and a dummy for being diagnosed as depressed at baseline. Column (1) interacts beliefs and costs with a dummy indicating whether there is an older female child in the household (constrained = no female child). Column (2) interacts beliefs and costs with a dummy indicating whether the grandmother lives in the household (constrained = grandmother not in household). Column (3) interacts beliefs and costs with a dummy indicating whether the mother lives in an agricultural household (constrained = agricultural household). A household is considered agricultural if anyone in the household owns or rents land for farming.

* $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$. Robust standard errors in parenthesis, clustered at the village level.

Sample: Excludes depressed mothers in the intervention group.

Table A14: Women with potentially no breastfeeding constraints

	(1) If had enough food	(2) If weight>10^{th} pctile.
ω_speak	0.055	0.154
	(0.380)	(0.385)
ω_health	−0.045	0.071
	(0.250)	(0.270)
ω_social	−0.211	−0.111
	(0.403)	(0.387)
ω_learn	1.003***	0.728**
	(0.348)	(0.367)
Breastfeeding is tiring	0.253	0.146
	(0.169)	(0.156)
Playing is tiring	−0.670***	−0.448**
	(0.192)	(0.195)
Controls	Yes	Yes
Observations	2216	2248
# mothers	554	562

Note: Results estimated using a multinomial logit model where mothers' alternatives are: no-bf, no-pl = not breastfeeding and not playing; bf, no-pl = breastfeeding but not playing; no-bf, pl = not breastfeeding but playing; bf, pl = breastfeeding and playing. The model includes a constant and the investment alternatives are evaluated against not breastfeeding and not playing (omitted category). ω_speak = preference parameter for a child being able to put 2-3 words together in speaking by age 2. ω_health = preference parameter for a child not experiencing frequent diarrhea. ω_social = preference parameter for a child playing happily with other children by age 3. ω_learn = preference parameter for a child learning well at school. Controls include the age of the mother and its square, the sex of the index child, 3 levels of parity (first child in womb, second, and third or higher), 4 levels of mother's education (no education, 1-5 years, 6-10 years, and +10 years), husband's education in years, a SES asset-based index, and a dummy for being diagnosed as depressed at baseline.

* $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$. Robust standard errors in parenthesis, clustered at the village level.

Sample: Excludes depressed mothers in the intervention group. In addition, Column (1) excludes women that did not have enough money to by food at baseline, and Column (2) excludes women with weight equal or below the 10^{th} percentile.

Table A15: Model estimates of the preference parameters with complementarities in investments

	Speak		Health		Social		Learn		All outcomes	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
Complementarity from pilot										
ω_speak	0.584**	0.531**							0.233	0.191
	(0.250)	(0.242)							(0.363)	(0.342)
ω_health			0.209	0.194					0.039	0.037
			(0.265)	(0.254)					(0.276)	(0.268)
ω_social					0.401*	0.389			−0.371	−0.303
					(0.225)	(0.245)			(0.355)	(0.369)
ω_learn							0.942***	0.861***	1.023***	0.923***
							(0.229)	(0.241)	(0.335)	(0.348)
Breastfeeding is tiring	0.203	0.213	0.195	0.204	0.201	0.211	0.233*	0.241	0.233*	0.241
	(0.132)	(0.145)	(0.131)	(0.145)	(0.131)	(0.144)	(0.134)	(0.148)	(0.134)	(0.148)
Playing is tiring	−0.690***	−0.611***	−0.722***	−0.638***	−0.703***	−0.621***	−0.674***	−0.596***	−0.675***	−0.597***
	(0.185)	(0.192)	(0.180)	(0.188)	(0.180)	(0.189)	(0.180)	(0.189)	(0.183)	(0.191)
5% complementarity										
ω_speak	0.588**	0.535**							0.230	0.188
	(0.251)	(0.242)							(0.366)	(0.345)
ω_health			0.208	0.192					0.036	0.033
			(0.265)	(0.254)					(0.276)	(0.268)
ω_social					0.400*	0.388			−0.395	−0.328
					(0.225)	(0.245)			(0.358)	(0.372)
ω_learn							0.961***	0.882***	1.059***	0.963***
							(0.229)	(0.240)	(0.340)	(0.353)
Breastfeeding is tiring	0.203	0.213	0.195	0.204	0.202	0.212	0.234*	0.242	0.234*	0.242
	(0.132)	(0.145)	(0.131)	(0.145)	(0.131)	(0.144)	(0.134)	(0.148)	(0.135)	(0.148)
Playing is tiring	−0.690***	−0.611***	−0.722***	−0.638***	−0.703***	−0.621***	−0.674***	−0.596***	−0.675***	−0.598***
	(0.185)	(0.192)	(0.180)	(0.188)	(0.180)	(0.189)	(0.181)	(0.189)	(0.184)	(0.191)
10% complementarity										
ω_speak	0.592**	0.541**							0.225	0.184
	(0.253)	(0.243)							(0.371)	(0.348)
ω_health			0.206	0.189					0.031	0.026
			(0.265)	(0.254)					(0.276)	(0.268)
ω_social					0.396*	0.384			−0.428	−0.365
					(0.225)	(0.244)			(0.361)	(0.375)
ω_learn							0.987***	0.912***	1.111***	1.020***
							(0.228)	(0.240)	(0.345)	(0.359)
Breastfeeding is tiring	0.204	0.214	0.195	0.204	0.202	0.212	0.235*	0.244	0.236*	0.244
	(0.132)	(0.145)	(0.131)	(0.145)	(0.131)	(0.144)	(0.134)	(0.149)	(0.135)	(0.149)
Playing is tiring	−0.691***	−0.611***	−0.722***	−0.638***	−0.704***	−0.622***	−0.673***	−0.596***	−0.676***	−0.599***
	(0.185)	(0.192)	(0.180)	(0.188)	(0.180)	(0.189)	(0.181)	(0.189)	(0.184)	(0.191)
Controls	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
Observations	2504	2504	2504	2504	2504	2504	2504	2504	2504	2504
# mothers	626	626	626	626	626	626	626	626	626	626

Note: Results estimated using a multinomial logit model where mothers' alternatives are: no-bf, no-pl = not breastfeeding and not playing; bf, no-pl = breastfeeding but not playing; no-bf, pl = not breastfeeding but playing; bf, pl = breastfeeding and playing. The model includes a constant and the investment alternatives are evaluated against not breastfeeding and not playing (omitted category). ω_speak = preference parameter for a child being able to put 2-3 words together in speaking by age 2. ω_health = preference parameter for a child not experiencing frequent diarrhea. ω_social = preference parameter for a child playing happily with other children by age 3. ω_learn = preference parameter for a child learning well at school. Controls include the age of the mother and its square, the sex of the index child, 3 levels of parity (first child in womb, second, and third or higher), 4 levels of mother's education (no education, 1-5 years, 6-10 years, and +10 years), husband's education in years, a SES asset-based index, and a dummy for being diagnosed as depressed at baseline. "Complementarity from pilot" defines that there is a 1.8% complementarity between investments when mothers both breastfeed and play with the child. This level of complementarity is calculated using a sample of women for which expected returns from investments where asked both jointly and independently. "5% complementarity" assumes that there is a 5% complementary between investments when mothers both breastfeed and play with the child; while "10% complementarity" assumes this level is of the order of 10%.

* p < 0.1, ** p < 0.05, *** p < 0.01. Robust standard errors in parenthesis, clustered at the village level.

Sample: Excludes depressed mothers in the intervention group.

Table A16: Model estimates: Additional specifications

	(1) Including treated mothers	(2) Positive returns	(3) Negative returns set to 0	(4) Average of all beliefs	(5) First-time mothers	(6) First-time mothers	(7) Baseline model (Unweighted)
ω_speak	0.127	−0.008	0.044			0.569	0.204
	(0.333)	(0.439)	(0.354)			(0.729)	(0.336)
ω_health	0.100	0.211	0.302			0.252	0.012
	(0.269)	(0.323)	(0.284)			(0.488)	(0.267)
ω_social	−0.067	0.256	0.021			−0.559	−0.292
	(0.340)	(0.404)	(0.411)			(0.753)	(0.366)
ω_learn	0.664**	0.722*	0.686**		0.931**	0.936	0.934***
	(0.339)	(0.394)	(0.348)		(0.448)	(0.608)	(0.340)
ω_all				0.875***			
				(0.316)			
Breastfeeding is tiring	0.195	0.098	0.223	0.224	0.350	0.372	0.248*
	(0.142)	(0.186)	(0.148)	(0.147)	(0.350)	(0.346)	(0.146)
Playing is tiring	−0.540***	−0.707***	−0.605***	−0.599***	−1.013***	−0.993***	−0.610***
	(0.179)	(0.219)	(0.188)	(0.190)	(0.333)	(0.340)	(0.189)
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	3352	2008	2504	2504	720	720	2504
# mothers	838	502	626	626	180	180	626

Note: Results estimated using a multinomial logit model where mothers' alternatives are: no-bf, no-pl = not breastfeeding and not playing; bf, no-pl = breastfeeding but not playing; no-bf, pl = not breastfeeding but playing; bf, pl = breastfeeding and playing. The model includes a constant and the investment alternatives are evaluated against not breastfeeding and not playing (omitted category). ω_speak = preference parameter for a child being able to put 2-3 words together in speaking by age 2. ω_health = preference parameter for a child not experiencing frequent diarrhea. ω_social = preference parameter for a child playing happily with other children by age 3. ω_learn = preference parameter for a child learning well at school. Controls include the age of the mother and its square, the sex of the index child, 3 levels of parity (first child in womb, second, and third or higher), 4 levels of mother's education (no education, 1-5 years, 6-10 years, and +10 years), husband's education in years, a SES asset-based index, and a dummy for being diagnosed as depressed at baseline. Column (1) includes depressed mothers in the intervention group; Column (2) excludes mothers with more than one negative expected returns from investments, Column (3) assumes returns from investments cannot be negative; Column (4) estimates the model taking the average across all beliefs; Columns (5) and (6) include only first-time mothers. Column (7) shows the results of estimating the baseline model without weighting observations to adjust for depression prevalence.

* $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$. Robust standard errors in parenthesis, clustered at the village level.

Sample: Column (1) all mothers, Columns (2 - 4) and (7) exclude depressed mothers in the intervention group. In addition, Column (2) excludes mothers with more than one negative expected returns from investments. Columns (5) and (6) also exclude women that had cared for babies of their own before.

Table A17a: Policy evaluations for different subsamples

Panel A: sample of depressed mothers (30% of women)

	(0) Baseline Predicted	(1) High SES beliefs	(2) Increase returns (v1)	(3) Increase returns (v2)	(4) Playing not costly	(5) 2 + 4	(6) 3 + 4	(7) Treat depression	(8) Educate women
Pr(No-bf, no-pl)	41.2	40.6	39.4	32.7	38.9	37.2	30.6	35.8	37.8
Pr(Bf, no-pl)	34.8	35.0	35.8	39.9	32.9	33.8	37.4	32.0	35.6
Pr(No-bf, pl)	12.3	12.5	12.5	13.9	14.3	14.6	16.1	13.9	15.5
Pr(Bf, pl)	11.8	11.9	12.2	13.5	13.9	14.4	15.8	18.3	11.0
Pr(Bf)	46.6	46.9	48.0	53.4	46.8	48.2	53.2	50.3	46.7
Pr(Pl)	24.0	24.4	24.7	27.4	28.2	29.0	31.9	32.3	26.5
Δ Pr(No-bf, no-pl)	**0.0**	**-0.6**	**-1.8**	**-8.5**	**-2.2**	**-4.0**	**-10.5**	**-5.4**	**-3.4**
Δ Pr(Bf)	**0.0**	**0.4**	**1.5**	**6.8**	**0.2**	**1.6**	**6.6**	**3.7**	**0.1**
Δ Pr(Pl)	**0.0**	**0.4**	**0.7**	**3.4**	**4.2**	**4.9**	**7.9**	**8.2**	**2.5**
Gap (Bf)	3.7	3.3	2.2	-3.2	3.5	2.1	-3.0	-0.1	3.5
Gap (Pl)	10.6	10.2	9.9	7.2	6.4	5.6	2.7	2.3	8.0

Panel B: sample of low educated mothers (76% of women)

	(0) Baseline Predicted	(1) High SES beliefs	(2) Increase returns (v1)	(3) Increase returns (v2)	(4) Playing not costly	(5) 2 + 4	(6) 3 + 4	(7) Treat depression	(8) Educate women
Pr(No-bf, no-pl)	38.5	38.0	36.7	30.2	36.4	34.7	28.4	36.6	34.6
Pr(Bf, no-pl)	32.9	33.1	33.9	37.5	31.1	31.9	35.1	32.0	33.9
Pr(No-bf, pl)	12.3	12.5	12.7	13.9	14.0	14.4	15.7	12.9	16.4
Pr(Bf, pl)	16.2	16.4	16.7	18.3	18.5	19.1	20.8	18.4	15.1
Pr(Bf)	49.1	49.5	50.6	55.8	49.6	51.0	55.9	50.5	49.0
Pr(Pl)	28.6	28.9	29.4	32.3	32.5	33.4	36.5	31.3	31.5
Δ Pr(No-bf, no-pl)	**0.0**	**-0.5**	**-1.8**	**-8.3**	**-2.1**	**-3.9**	**-10.1**	**-1.9**	**-3.9**
Δ Pr(Bf)	**0.0**	**0.3**	**1.5**	**6.7**	**0.4**	**1.8**	**6.8**	**1.4**	**-0.2**
Δ Pr(Pl)	**0.0**	**0.3**	**0.9**	**3.7**	**3.9**	**4.9**	**8.0**	**2.8**	**3.0**
Gap (Bf)	0.1	-0.3	-1.4	-6.6	-0.4	-1.8	-6.7	-1.3	0.2
Gap (Pl)	11.8	11.5	10.9	8.1	7.8	6.9	3.8	9.0	8.8

Panel C: sample of mothers with low SES (45% of women)

	(0) Baseline Predicted	(1) High SES beliefs	(2) Increase returns (v1)	(3) Increase returns (v2)	(4) Playing not costly	(5) 2 + 4	(6) 3 + 4	(7) Treat depression	(8) Educate women
Pr(No-bf, no-pl)	40.1	39.2	38.3	31.6	37.7	36.0	29.6	37.9	36.4
Pr(Bf, no-pl)	34.6	34.9	35.6	39.6	32.6	33.5	36.9	33.6	35.9
Pr(No-bf, pl)	11.8	12.2	12.2	13.4	13.8	14.2	15.5	12.6	15.3
Pr(Bf, pl)	13.5	13.8	13.9	15.3	15.9	16.4	18.0	15.9	12.4
Pr(Bf)	48.1	48.6	49.5	54.9	48.5	49.9	54.9	49.4	48.3
Pr(Pl)	25.3	25.9	26.1	28.8	29.7	30.6	33.5	28.5	27.7
Δ Pr(No-bf, no-pl)	**0.0**	**-0.9**	**-1.8**	**-8.4**	**-2.3**	**-4.1**	**-10.5**	**-2.1**	**-3.6**
Δ Pr(Bf)	**0.0**	**0.5**	**1.4**	**6.8**	**0.4**	**1.7**	**6.8**	**1.3**	**0.1**
Δ Pr(Pl)	**0.0**	**0.6**	**0.8**	**3.5**	**4.4**	**5.3**	**8.2**	**3.2**	**2.4**
Gap (Bf)	1.9	1.4	0.5	-4.9	1.5	0.2	-4.9	0.6	1.7
Gap (Pl)	11.3	10.7	10.5	7.9	7.0	6.1	3.1	8.1	8.9

Note: Predicted probabilities estimated after a multinomial logit model where the preference parameters for children's developmental outcomes are evaluated jointly and where mothers' alternatives are: no-bf, no-pl = not breastfeeding and not playing; bf, no-pl = breastfeeding but not playing; no-bf, pl = not breastfeeding but playing; bf, pl = breastfeeding and playing. Col (0) - Baseline predicted probabilities; Col (1) - Low SES mothers have the beliefs held by the high SES mothers; Col (2) - The probability of children achieving developmental outcomes is increased by 10 pp. Col (3) - The probability of children achieving developmental outcomes is increased by the IQR of the average expected return of single investments (average increase of 43 pp); Col (4) - The effort cost of playing is suppressed; Col (5) - Combines Col (2) and Col (4); Col (6) - Combines Col (3) and Col (4); Col (7) - Depression status is changed to not depressed, and beliefs and costs are set at the value that not depressed mothers have; Col (8) - Education level is set at +10 years of education, and beliefs and costs are set at the value that mothers with +10 years of education have. Low educated mothers are defined as those with 10 or less years of education. The gap in investments is given by the difference between the predicted investment level among the treated group in each of the policy scenarios and the predicted investment level at baseline of the untreated group, which is: Panel A = nondepressed mothers; Panel B = high educated mothers; Panel C = high SES mothers.

Table A17b: Policy evaluations for different subsamples

Panel D: sample of mothers with at least two expected zero return (exluding 0 return on diarrhea from playing) (36% of women)

	(0) Baseline Predicted	(1) High SES beliefs	(2) Increase returns (v1)	(3) Increase returns (v2)	(4) Playing not costly	(5) 2 + 4	(6) 3 + 4	(7) Treat depression	(8) Educate women
Pr(No-bf, no-pl)	42.3	39.4	40.5	33.1	39.4	37.7	30.5	39.3	35.5
Pr(Bf, no-pl)	30.8	32.4	31.7	35.9	28.7	29.4	33.0	30.5	33.3
Pr(No-bf, pl)	12.5	13.1	12.9	14.4	14.8	15.3	16.9	13.5	16.7
Pr(Bf, pl)	14.3	15.1	14.8	16.6	17.1	17.6	19.6	16.7	14.5
Pr(Bf)	45.1	47.5	46.5	52.5	45.7	47.1	52.6	47.2	47.8
Pr(Pl)	26.8	28.2	27.7	31.0	31.9	32.9	36.5	30.2	31.2
Δ Pr(No-bf, no-pl)	**0.0**	**-2.9**	**-1.8**	**-9.2**	**-2.9**	**-4.7**	**-11.8**	**-3.0**	**-6.8**
Δ Pr(Bf)	**0.0**	**2.3**	**1.4**	**7.4**	**0.6**	**1.9**	**7.5**	**2.1**	**2.6**
Δ Pr(Pl)	**0.0**	**1.3**	**0.9**	**4.1**	**5.1**	**6.1**	**9.6**	**3.3**	**4.4**
Gap (Bf)	6.2	3.8	4.8	-1.2	5.6	4.2	-1.3	4.1	3.5
Gap (Pl)	7.1	5.8	6.2	3.0	2.1	1.1	-2.5	3.8	2.8

Panel E: sample of mothers with high cost on any investment (17% of women)

	(0) Baseline Predicted	(1) High SES beliefs	(2) Increase returns (v1)	(3) Increase returns (v2)	(4) Playing not costly	(5) 2 + 4	(6) 3 + 4	(7) Treat depression	(8) Educate women
Pr(No-bf, no-pl)	39.9	38.9	38.0	31.1	34.8	32.9	26.6	37.3	35.3
Pr(Bf, no-pl)	36.5	37.0	37.7	41.9	31.8	32.7	35.9	34.1	34.9
Pr(No-bf, pl)	9.8	10.0	10.1	11.1	14.0	14.4	15.6	11.5	15.2
Pr(Bf, pl)	13.8	14.1	14.3	15.8	19.4	19.9	21.8	17.1	14.5
Pr(Bf)	50.3	51.1	51.9	57.7	51.3	52.7	57.8	51.2	49.5
Pr(Pl)	23.6	24.1	24.4	26.9	33.4	34.3	37.4	28.6	29.7
Δ Pr(No-bf, no-pl)	**0.0**	**-1.0**	**-2.0**	**-8.8**	**-5.1**	**-7.0**	**-13.3**	**-2.6**	**-4.6**
Δ Pr(Bf)	**0.0**	**0.8**	**1.6**	**7.4**	**0.9**	**2.4**	**7.4**	**0.9**	**-0.8**
Δ Pr(Pl)	**0.0**	**0.5**	**0.8**	**3.3**	**9.8**	**10.7**	**13.8**	**5.0**	**6.1**
Gap (Bf)	-1.0	-1.8	-2.6	-8.4	-1.9	-3.4	-8.4	-1.9	-0.2
Gap (Pl)	9.5	9.0	8.7	6.2	-0.3	-1.2	-4.3	4.5	3.4

Note: Predicted probabilities estimated after a multinomial logit model where the preference parameters for children's developmental outcomes are evaluated jointly and where mothers' alternatives are: no-bf, no-pl = not breastfeeding and not playing; bf, no-pl = breastfeeding but not playing; no-bf, pl = not breastfeeding but playing; bf, pl = breastfeeding and playing. Col (0) - Baseline predicted probabilities; Col (1) - Low SES mothers have the beliefs held by the high SES mothers; Col (2) - The probability of children achieving developmental outcomes is increased by 10 pp. Col (3) - The probability of children achieving developmental outcomes is increased by the IQR of the average expected return of single investments (average increase of 43 pp); Col (4) - The effort cost of playing is suppressed; Col (5) - Combines Col (2) and Col (4); Col (6) - Combines Col (3) and Col (4); Col (7) - Depression status is changed to not depressed, and beliefs and costs are set at the value that not depressed mothers have; Col (8) - Education level is set at +10 years of education, and beliefs and costs are set at the value that mothers with +10 years of education have. The gap in investments is given by the difference between the predicted investment level among the treated group in each of the policy scenarios and the predicted investment level at baseline of the untreated group, which is: Panel D = mothers with less than two expected zero returns (excluding 0 return on diarrhea from playing); Panel D = mothers with low cost on both investments.

B Data Appendix

B.1 Questionnaire

Now I am going to ask you some questions about your beliefs regarding certain behaviours that a mother in your community could have and its effect on her child.

Before that, let's talk about how I am going to understand your answers better. We will use different sizes of bars to record your answer. I will show you ten bars of different sizes. I would like you to choose one of the bars out of these ten bars over here to express what you think is the chance of a specific event happening. The smaller the bar, the lesser chances are for that specific event to happen. On the other hand, the bigger the bar, the higher the chances are for that specific event to happen. In other words, as you increase the size of the bar the chances increase. If you choose zero, it means you are sure that the event will NOT happen. If you choose 1, it means one chance out of 10. If you choose 1 or 2, it means you think the event is not likely to happen, but it is still possible. If you pick 5, it means that it is just as likely it happens as it does not happen (fifty-fifty). If you pick 6, it means the event is slightly more likely to happen than not to happen. If you put 10, it means you are sure the event will happen. There is no right or wrong answer; I just want to know what you think.

Let me ask you a couple of questions to make sure you understand how to answer using the bars.

Pick the size of the bar that reflects how likely the following event can happen... (*Training questions*)

(a) *A woman in your community will go to the market at least once within the next 2 days.*

(b) *A woman in your community will go to the market at least once within the next 2 weeks.*

Within your community, the maternal behaviors that we are interested in are a) breast-feeding and b) playing with the child. We are interested in whether you think these might

influence the health and growth of children (including getting ill, doing well at school, being able to speak and engage with others).

Some people think these behaviors affect their children and some people don't think they make a difference. Among people who think they make a difference, some think they make a big difference and others think they make only a small difference. There is no right or wrong answer; we just want to know what you think. When answering the questions please think of another mother like you.

First, I am going to ask you questions regarding breastfeeding and its influence on the health and growth of children. Please provide your answers to the questions that I will ask you with the help of the bars.

(1) In your view, what is the likelihood of a child/infant in your community to frequently have diarrhea:

   (a) If the mother exclusively breastfeeds for 6 months.
   (b) If the mother does not exclusively breastfeed for 6 months.

(2) In your view, what is the likelihood of a child to put 2-3 words together in speaking by age 2 years of his/her life:

   (a) If the mother exclusively breastfeeds for 6 months.
   (b) If the mother does not exclusively breastfeed for 6 months.

(3) In your view, what is the likelihood that a child will happily play with other children by age 3:

   (a) If the mother exclusively breastfeeds for 6 months.
   (b) If the mother does not exclusively breastfeed for 6 months.

(4) In your view, what is the likelihood that a child in your community will learn well at school:

(a) If the mother exclusively breastfeeds for 6 months.

(b) If the mother does not exclusively breastfeed for 6 months.

Now we are going to ask the same questions that we asked earlier but this time we will relate them to someone who plays with the child instead of to breastfeeding behavior. Again, there is no right or wrong answer; we just want to know what you think.

Please provide your answers to the questions that I will ask you with the help of the bars.

(1) In your view, what is the likelihood of a child/infant in your community to frequently have diarrhea:

(a) If the mother plays with the child frequently to help them learn new things.

(b) If the mother plays with the child rarely to help them learn new things.

(2) In your view, what is the likelihood of a child to put 2-3 words together in speaking by age 2 years of his/her life:

(a) If the mother plays with the child frequently to help them learn new things.

(b) If the mother plays with the child rarely to help them learn new things.

(3) In your view, what is the likelihood that a child will happily play with other children by age 3:

(a) If the mother plays with the child frequently to help them learn new things.

(b) If the mother plays with the child rarely to help them learn new things.

(4) In your view, what is the likelihood that a child in your community will learn well at school:

(a) If the mother plays with the child frequently to help them learn new things.

(b) If the mother plays with the child rarely to help them learn new things.

B.2 Construction of variables

Measuring depression.

Depression was assessed using the patient health questionnaire (PHQ-9), which queries a series of symptoms of depression, each being scored on a four-point Likert scale. The PHQ-9 asks about the following 9 items: 1) Little interest or pleasure in doing things. 2) Feeling down, depressed, or hopeless. 3) Trouble falling or staying asleep, or sleeping too much. 4) Feeling tired or having little energy. 5) Poor appetite or overeating. 6) Feeling bad about yourself, or that you are a failure or have let yourself or your family down. 7) Trouble concentrating on things, such as reading the newspaper or watching television. 8) Moving or speaking so slowly that other people could have noticed? Or the opposite, being so fidgety or restless that you have been moving around a lot more than usual. 9) Thoughts that you would be better off dead or of hurting yourself in some way. Women were classified as depressed when their score was 10 or above, as this cut-off point has been proven to have a high predictive power for the diagnosis of depressive disorder (Kroenke, Spitzer, and Williams 2001).

Measuring maternal investments

Exclusive breastfeeding is measured by asking mothers all the nutrients given to their child in the last 24 hours, including breast milk, a herbal cocktail (ghutti), herbal water, water, tea (chai), formula milk, other animal milk (cow, goat, buffalo), semi-solid food, solid food, or other. See Appendix Table A2 for a detailed summary of feeding practices in our study area. Mothers are considered as exclusively breastfeeding if they are giving only breast milk.

Play is measured through a question collected within the Infant-Toddler HOME (Home Observation Measurement of the Environment) inventory questionnaire designed for children aged 0-3 (Cox et al., 2002). The enumerators are instructed to look out for the behavior and to question the mother. The HOME inventory has 6 sections covering the following topics:

I RESPONSIVITY

1. Parent permits child to engage in "messy" play.
2. Parent spontaneously vocalizes to the child at least twice.

3. Parent responds verbally to the child's vocalizations or verbalizations.
4. Parent tells child name of object or person during visit.
5. Parent's speech is distinct, clear, and audible.
6. Parent initiates verbal interchanges with visitor.
7. Parent converses freely and easily.
8. Parent spontaneously praises child at least twice.
9. Parent's voice conveys positive feelings towards child.
10. Parent caresses or kisses child at least once.
11. Parent responds positively to praise of child offered by visitor.

II ACCEPTANCE

12. No more than one instance of physical punishment during past week.
13. Family has a pet.
14. Parent does not shout at child.
15. Parent does not express overt annoyance with or hostility to child.
16. Parent neither slaps nor spanks child during visit.
17. Parent does not scold or criticize child during visit.
18. Parent does not interfere with or restrict child more than three times during visit.
19. At least ten books are present and visible.

III ORGANIZATION

20. Child care, if used, is provided by one of three regular substitutes.
21. Child is taken to grocery store at least once a week.
22. Child gets out of house at least four times a week.
23. Child is taken regularly to doctor's office or clinic.
24. Child has a special place for toys and treasures.
25. Child's play environment is safe.

IV LEARNING MATERIAL

26. Muscle activity toys or equipment.
27. Push or pull toys.
28. Stroller or walker, kiddie car, scooter, or tricycle.
29. Cuddly toys or role- playing toys.
30. Learning facilitators-mobile, table, and chair, high chair, play pen.
31. Simple hand-eye coordination toys.
32. Complex hand-eye coordination toys.
33. Toys for literature and music.
34. Parent provides toys for child to play with during visit.

V INVOLVEMENT

35. Parent talks to child while doing household work.
36. Parent consciously encourages developmental advance.
37. Parent invests maturing toys with value via personal attention.
38. Parent guides during play/structures child's play period

39. Parent provides toys that challenge child to develop new skills.
40. Parent keeps child in visual range, looks at often.

VI VARIETY

41. Father provides some care daily.
42. Parent reads stories to child at least three times weekly.
43. Child eats at least one meal a day with mother and father.
44. Family visit relatives or receives visits once a month or so.
45. Child has three or more books of his/her own.

All items are answered with either yes (value of 1) or no (value of 0). Our main outcome of play uses the answer to item 38. In Section 8, we conduct robustness checks by considering mothers to be making the playing investment when she scores in the top tertile of:

1– The HOME Score

2– The Stimulation Score (combining the score in the Responsivity and Involvement

3– The first principal component (PCA) of the Stimulation items (Responsivity and Involvement items)

Measuring expected cost

We elicited expected effort costs associated with making the investments by asking mothers at baseline (before birth) to report on a Likert scale how tiring they expected it would be to breastfeed or to play with a baby. The scale had 4 points, indicating rarely or never, sometimes, most of the times, or don't know.

Other constructed variables

Wealth: We construct a measure of wealth using an asset-based index that has been widely in household surveys such as the Demographic and Health Surveys. It is constructed using polychoric correlations, more suited for categorical variables than standard correlations (Kolenikov and Angeles, 2004). It includes asset variables for which less than or equal to 90% of people owned the asset and less than or equal to 90% of people did not own the item. This ensured enough variability in the items going into the principal components score.

Farming household: If women respond that she or any other household member owns or rent any land for farming, we consider the women as living in agricultural or farming household (60% of households).