

# Putting Research to Work for Military Families



Focus:  
Civilian

## Technologies for expanding the reach of evidence-based interventions: Preliminary results for promoting social emotional development in early childhood

Baggett, M. K., Davis, B., Feil, E. G., Sheeber, L. L., Landry, S. H., Carta, J. J., & Leve C. (2010). Technologies for Expanding the Reach of Evidence-Based Interventions: Preliminary Results for Promoting Social Emotional Development in Early Childhood *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education*, 29(4), 226-238. doi:10.1177/02711271121409354782

**SUMMARY:** Pre- and post-test data from infant and mothers who completed an adapted evidence-based early childhood intervention program (Play and Learning Strategies [PALS]) for use on the internet (Infant Net) were assessed to explore changes in parenting (i.e., depression, sensitive and responsive interactions) and infant social outcomes (i.e., attention/arousal, warmth seeking, and behavioral regulation). Results indicate that completion rates of the online program were high and mothers and infants randomly assigned to the PALS intervention showed significant improvements in infant social outcomes compared to the control group.

### KEY FINDINGS:

- Infants assigned to the Infant Net group showed greater improvement in positive behaviors post intervention compared to the control group.
- Maternal positive behaviors showed greater improvement over time for mothers in the Infant Net condition, compared to the control group, but was not statistically significant.
- Post partum depression decreased more for mothers in the Infant Net group, compared to the control group, but was not statistically significant.

### IMPLICATIONS FOR MILITARY PROFESSIONALS:

Military professionals could:

- Collaborate with parenting intervention program staff to adapt evidence-based interventions for military families
- Examine way to adapt evidence-based parenting interventions so that they can be offered online and be more accessible to military families who otherwise may not have access to early intervention

### IMPLICATIONS FOR PROGRAMS:

Programs could:

- Provide education to military families coping with mental health issues regarding how mental health can impact parenting and child well-being and ways to effectively cope with mental health issues
- Publicize information regarding resources and services available to Service members and their families regarding mental health and parenting

### IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICIES:

Policies could:

- Encourage the adaptation of web-based parenting interventions
- Recommend professional development for service providers working with military families regarding the unique issues military parents experience and how these influence parenting and child well-being

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## METHODS

- The authors used a pre-test, post-test, experimental design wherein changes in behavior between pre and post-test were compared between an experimental and control group.
- This article focused on civilian families.
- Participants included infants and their mothers living in Oregon; participants were income-eligible for Early Head Start and the Women Infants and Children program (WIC).

## PARTICIPANTS

- Children's ranged from 3-8 months of age, with an average of 4 months; 55% of the infants were male.
- Mothers were primarily White (83%); the average age of mothers in the intervention group was 24.5 years, while the control group had an average of 26.8 years.
- According to mothers' reports, infants were more ethnically diverse, with 65% Caucasian, 25% Hispanic/Latino, 5% American Indian, 3% Asian, 5% African American, and 22.5% reporting more than one category.

## LIMITATIONS

- This study sample was homogenous and had a small sample size, with only 38 mothers and their infants participating; therefore, results may not be generalizable.
- Dosage received could not be assessed due to lack of variance in dosage received, which may have important implications on the results.
- Only mothers that were income eligible for Early Head Start and the Women Infants and Children program were included in this study, which may influence the results.

## AVENUES FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Future research could:

- Utilize a larger in order to evaluating the utility and outcomes of adapting programs and interventions for on-line use
- Utilize other interventions and/or programs that could be adapted to on-line use
- Examine a diverse set of child, youth, parenting, and family outcomes to expand the potential uses of this innovative research

## ASSESSING RESEARCH THAT WORKS



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