

Putting Research to Work for Military Families



Focus:
Civilian

Promoting Effective Parenting Practices and Preventing Child Behavior Problems in School Among Ethnically Diverse Families From Underserved, Urban Communities

Brotman, L. M., Calzada, E., Huang, K., Kingston, S., Dawson-Clure, S., Kamboukos, D., ... Petkova, E. (2011). Promoting effective parenting practices and preventing child behavior problems in school among ethnically diverse families from underserved, urban communities. *Child Development*, 82(1), 258-276. doi:10.1111/j.1467-8624.2010.01554.x

SUMMARY: Children enrolled in prekindergarten in a New York City school district participated in a randomized controlled trial of a 13-session parenting intervention program. The program was designed to be engaging and relevant for ethnically diverse, urban families, and youth were assessed both pre- and post-intervention. The intervention resulted in significant improvements in parent-reported parenting behavior and teacher-reported child behavior problems compared to those in the non-intervention group.

KEY FINDINGS:

- The intervention led to significant, medium sized effects on both effective parenting practices and child behavior problems in the classroom immediately after completion of the intervention.
- Cultural group and baseline risk factors (parents with lower baseline effective parenting practices and children with higher problem behaviors) were not significantly associated with differential effects on these outcomes (i.e., all groups benefited equally).
- The number of class sessions attended was positively related to improvements in parenting.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PROGRAMS:

Programs could:

- Offer classes that train military parents in effective parenting practices and consider offering these programs via video-conferencing, online modalities, or via the internet to meet the needs of rural military families
- Examine existing parenting interventions and consider useful modifications to meet the needs of a military family population

IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICIES:

Policies could:

- Encourage the evaluation of parenting programs for military families to determine program effectiveness
- Recommend staff training in parenting interventions that have a strong evidence base documenting their effectiveness

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METHODS

- Eight public schools in New York City participated in a randomized trial of thirteen two-hour groups aimed at enhancing parenting skills.
- Parent sessions were held at the child's school.
- Children and families from these schools were assessed at Time 1 (fall prior to intervention) and Time 2 (spring, post-intervention) on effective parenting practices, child behavior problems, predictors of academic achievement, and parent engagement.

PARTICIPANTS

- One hundred seventy-one children attending pre-K in eight schools (69% in intervention schools) participated.
- Fifty-six percent of participants were female and the majority of participants were Black (39%) or Latino/Latina (24%).
- Average age of child at Time 1 was 4.41 years (SD = 0.33 years).

LIMITATIONS

- The sample size of 171 prevented researchers from being able to examine outcomes by subgroups, limiting the results.
- Teachers at both the intervention and control schools received training in these strategies which made it more difficult to assess differences between the two groups.
- Study recruitment rates were low; those who consented to participate may differ from all families.

AVENUES FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Future research could:

- Assess if there are any longer-term benefits in the school setting for children who participated in this intervention
- Explore effective ways of engaging single parent families and those parents with lower education levels in parenting interventions
- Conduct a similar study with military affiliated children

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