

# Putting Research to Work for Military Families



Focus:  
Civilian

## Feasibility and Acceptability of a Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Program for Childcare Professionals: Comparison of a Web-Based and In-Person Training

Rheingold, A. A., Zajac, K., & Patton, M. (2012). Feasibility and acceptability of a child sexual abuse prevention program for childcare professionals: Comparison of a web-based and in-person training. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse*, 21, 422-436. doi:10.1080/10538712.2012.675422

**SUMMARY:** It is important to provide child sexual abuse prevention programs for child care workers; however, there is limited research on the feasibility and acceptability of such programs. This study randomly assigned 188 child care workers to two formats (in-person and web-based) of a child sexual abuse prevention program, "Stewards of Children." Results indicated that both formats were well-received by child care workers and there were no significant differences in feasibility and acceptability of the two formats.

### KEY FINDINGS:

- No significant difference was found between the in-person and web-based training formats in terms of feasibility to implement and acceptance to child care workers.
- Compared to web-based training, child care workers who received in-person training were more likely to share the training information with others and felt more comfortable.
- Approximately one quarter (24%) of child care workers who received web-based training reported at least one technical issue.

### IMPLICATIONS FOR MILITARY PROFESSIONALS:

Military professionals could:

- Recommend different child sexual abuse prevention programs based on different military family's needs to maximize the likelihood that the families will benefit from the program
- Facilitate support groups in various formats (e.g., children alone, children and parents) for military-affiliated children who experienced sexual abuse

### IMPLICATIONS FOR PROGRAMS:

Programs could:

- Develop workshops for Service members and their families on effective ways to prevent child sexual abuse
- Offer both in-person and web-based child maltreatment prevention programs to meet different military families' needs

### IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICIES:

Policies could:

- Continue to support child sexual abuse prevention programs for child care providers who work with military families
- Continue to support the development of web technologies so that military families can access web-based training easily

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## METHODS

- Participants were recruited from several child-serving organizations (e.g., schools, daycares); the method of recruitment was not specified, and participants had to be child care workers to be included in the study.
- Participants were randomly assigned to the in-person training group (n = 119, completion rate = 78%) and the web-based group (n = 117, completion rate = 81%); both training formats took about 2.5 hours.
- Participants' perceptions of the feasibility and acceptability of the training were assessed at the end of the training, and data were analyzed to compare the feasibility and acceptability of the two training formats.

## PARTICIPANTS

- Participants were 188 child care workers (85% female) who completed either the in-person or web-based training.
- The average age of participants was 39 years (age range = 19-64 years, SD = 11.4).
- The majority of participants were White (65%), followed by Black (28%); the race/ethnicity of the other 7% of participants was not specified.

## LIMITATIONS

- The questionnaires used to assess the feasibility and acceptability of the training were designed exclusively for this study; therefore, the reliability and validity of the questionnaires were unknown.
- Child care workers of different professions (e.g., teachers, day care providers, coaches) may have different opinions about the training; however, the design of the study did not allow for examining the potential differences based on worker type.
- The study examined the feasibility and acceptability of different formats of one single child sexual abuse prevention program; therefore, the conclusions related to the different formats may not apply to other child sexual abuse prevention programs.

## AVENUES FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Future research could:

- Investigate whether child care workers of different professions have different opinions about child sexual abuse prevention programs
- Examine the effectiveness, feasibility, and acceptability of diverse formats of other child sexual abuse prevention programs
- Examine factors (e.g., length, materials) that may contribute to the effectiveness, feasibility, and acceptability of a child sexual abuse prevention program

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