

Putting Research to Work for Military Families



Focus:
Civilian

Parent Engagement and School Readiness: Effects of the Getting Ready Intervention on Preschool Children's Social—Emotional Competencies

Sheridan, S. M., Knoche, L. L., Edwards, C. P., Bovaird, J. A., & Kupzyk, K. A. (2010). Parent engagement and school readiness: Effects of the getting ready intervention on preschool children's social-emotional competencies. *Early Education & Development, 21*(1), 125-156. doi:10.1080/10409280902783517

SUMMARY: Parental engagement is an important contributor to preschool children's school readiness. The effectiveness of the Getting Ready parental intervention program was examined in the study. Two groups of children were randomly assigned to the intervention condition or the control condition, and results revealed that the intervention was effective at building children's social-emotional competencies, which in turn built children's school readiness.

KEY FINDINGS:

- Children in the Getting Ready treatment group gained more social-emotional competencies (i.e., a child's ability to interact with and form relationships with others) after the two-year program compared to children in the control group.
- Children in the treatment group experienced a reduction in anxiety and withdrawal, whereas children in the control group did not.
- No differences in behavioral concerns (e.g., anger, behavioral problems, lack of self-control) between the two groups were observed.

IMPLICATIONS FOR MILITARY PROFESSIONALS:

Military professionals could:

- Help military parents develop strategies to increase their children's school readiness
- Participate in professional trainings to learn about the special challenges faced by military families in terms of child education

IMPLICATIONS FOR PROGRAMS:

Programs could:

- Collaborate with civilian parent education programs to increase the availability of parent education for military families
- Offer workshops for military parents to improve their parental engagement

IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICIES:

Policies could:

- Continue to support programs aimed at increasing military children's school readiness
- Raise awareness of the importance of parental engagement on military children's well-being

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METHODS

- Families were recruited from the Head Start program, and were randomly assigned to the treatment or the control conditions; the attrition rates during the two-year study were 46% for the treatment group, and 53% for the control group.
- Families in the treatment condition received Getting Ready intervention, whereas families in the control condition did not; the numbers of families in the two conditions were not indicated.
- Data were gathered primarily by having teachers report children's social-emotional outcomes and behavioral concerns.

PARTICIPANTS

- Participants were 220 disadvantaged children enrolled in the Head Start program and their parents.
- The children ranged in age from 35.94 to 52.63 months (M = 43.06 months, SD = 3.55), and 49% of them were female.
- Most of the participants were White (33%), followed by Black (18%), Latino (25%), and other (24%).

LIMITATIONS

- The children outcome measures were based on teacher report only, so it is unclear how the parents perceived the outcomes, and data based on teachers' observations may not be applicable to behaviors at home.
- Teachers in the treatment group had more interactions with project staff than teachers in the control group, therefore they may be aware of the experiment assignment, and the results may not be objective.
- Results from English- and Spanish-speaking children were mixed together, so it is unclear if there are any differences between the two groups.

AVENUES FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Future research could:

- Assess children outcomes via both parent and teacher reports so that the results are more comprehensive
- Define disadvantaged families clearly through criteria such as family income and parent education levels
- Examine how families from different cultures may react differently to the intervention

ASSESSING RESEARCH THAT WORKS



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