



Effective Health Care Attunement Parenting for Adoptive and Foster Parents Nomination Summary Document

Results of Topic Selection Process & Next Steps

- Attunement parenting for adoptive and foster parents will go forward for refinement as a systematic review. The scope of this topic, including populations, interventions, comparators, and outcomes, will be further developed in the refinement phase.
- When key questions have been drafted, they will be posted on the AHRQ Web site and open for public comment. To sign up for notification when this and other Effective Health Care (EHC) Program topics are posted for public comment, please go to <http://effectivehealthcare.ahrq.gov/index.cfm/join-the-email-list1/>.

Topic Description

Nominator: Individual

Nomination Summary: The nominator is interested in the effectiveness of “attunement parenting” in improving children’s mental health and reducing problem behaviors (such as delinquency and other types of antisocial behavior) to prevent negative life outcomes.

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Population(s): Children (under 18 years of age) in foster care, children adopted from foster care, and children adopted domestically or internationally and their foster or adoptive parents.

Intervention(s): Parent-mediated interventions to establish or improve the relationship between foster or adoptive parent and child with the goal of preventing or addressing child mental health and behavioral problems.

Comparator(s): Usual care, wait list control, or any other intervention not meeting the criteria of our interventions of interest including educational programs with didactic, informational, and discussion formats.

Outcome(s): Mental health, behavioral, and developmental outcomes

Key Questions from Nominator:

1. For adopted and foster children, what is the effectiveness of attunement-focused interventions with adoptive and foster parents to reduce problem behavior in childhood, adolescence, and adulthood?

Considerations

- The topic meets all EHC Program selection criteria. (For more information, see <http://effectivehealthcare.ahrq.gov/index.cfm/submit-a-suggestion-for-research/how-are-research-topics-chosen/>.)
- Children in foster care, children adopted from foster care, and children adopted domestically or internationally can suffer from the traumatic loss of their biological parent and consequently are at risk for attachment disorder. A large body of research spanning the neurobiological, behavioral, and social sciences has made clear the deleterious effects of attachment disruption on children's emotional and social development, including its role in the development of psychopathology. In addition to attachment disruption, this population is also at risk of exposure to other traumatic experiences, including abuse or neglect, serious emotional deprivation in institutional care, multiple forced separations and reunions with attachment figures, and exposure to domestic or community violence. There is currently an absence of clear guidance on parent-mediated interventions to establish or improve relationships between foster or adoptive parents and the children they are caring for.
- The focus of a review on this topic will be on interventions that are parent-mediated and focus on both the adult and child, and will compare the effectiveness of interventions such as psychotherapeutic based vs. behavioral interventions.