

Parenting Programs

Review 1

Barlow, J., Smailagic, N., Ferriter, M., Bennett, C., & Jones, H. (2010). Group-based parent-training programmes for improving emotional and behavioural adjustment in children from birth to three years old. *Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews*. PubMed abstract available at <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/20238324>.

Objectives	Establish whether group-based parenting programs are effective in improving the emotional and behavioral adjustment of children aged 3 or younger, and assess the role of parenting programs in the primary prevention of emotional and behavioral problems.
Studies Included	Eight U.S. and international studies published between 1992 to 2007
Participants in the Studies	Primary caregivers, including mothers, fathers, foster parents, grandparents, or relatives, of children from birth to 5 years (maximum mean age was 3 years 11 months), with or without emotional or behavioral problems
Settings	Settings were not reported for the studies.
Outcomes	Child emotional and behavioral adjustment, child cognitive development, parent-child interaction
Limitations of the Studies	Some studies did not report whether assessors were blinded; outcome data were not adequately addressed; no information was given about attrition and missing outcomes in one study; some studies provided no description of the known confounding factors; parent reports tend to overestimate the benefits of an intervention; small sample sizes; potential conflicts of interest were not reported

Results

Parenting programs are interventions aimed at helping parents improve their relationship with their child. This review evaluated the effectiveness of brief (4- to 12-week) group-based parenting programs (behavioral, cognitive behavioral, or videotape modeling) focused on treating existing emotional and behavioral problems or preventing the development of such problems in children. Both parent reports and independent observations of children's behavior produced significant results favoring the intervention group postintervention. A meta-analysis of follow-up data indicated significant results favoring the intervention group for parent reports but a nonsignificant result for independent observations. There were limited and conflicting data regarding the long-term effectiveness of these programs and insufficient evidence to make firm conclusions regarding the role parenting programs play in the primary prevention of emotional and behavioral problems in children.