

Parenting Programs

Review 2

Barlow, J., & Stewart-Brown, S. (2000). Behavior problems and group-based parent education programs. *Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics*, 21, 356–370. PubMed abstract available at <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/11064964>.

Objectives	Examine the effectiveness of group parent education (group-based programs with a standardized format aimed at enhancing parenting skills) programs that aimed to improve behavior problems in 3- to 10-year-old children.
Studies Included	Sixteen U.S. and international studies from 1975 to 1995
Participants in the Studies	Parents and their children with a mean age between 3 and 10 years who have defined behavior problems, including at least one externalizing problem (e.g., temper tantrums, aggression, noncompliance); children with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) were excluded
Settings	Settings were not reported for the studies.
Outcomes	Parents’ reports and independent observations of changes in children’s externalizing behaviors, such as temper tantrums, aggression, and noncompliance
Limitations of the Studies	Lack of rigorous randomization procedures; similarity of groups at start of trial not measured; lack of accounting for attrition may result in overestimation of treatment effect size; not possible to blind facilitators or patients to condition; lack of blind assessors of outcome; generalizability of results limited by lack of demographic information about participants; samples made up of volunteers/self-referred to group; studies included children with a wide range of behavior problems and wide range of ages

Results

This review focused on parent education programs that are standardized, group-based, and aimed at enhancing parenting skills. A variety of techniques was used to teach these programs, ranging from verbal instruction supplemented with reading materials to videotape modeling. The duration of the programs and length and frequency varied. Overall, analyses indicated positive changes in both parental perceptions and objective measures of children’s behavior. Specifically, all parent education intervention groups were effective in producing positive changes in parental perceptions of their children’s behavior. There was significant improvement in children’s behavior in studies that compared behavioral parent education programs with a no-treatment or wait-list control group. All but one study demonstrated that the positive effects of the parent education programs on children’s behavior were maintained 6 months to 3 years later.