

Parenting Programs

Review 7

Miller, S., Maguire, L. K., & Macdonald, G. (2011). Home-based child development interventions for preschool children from socially disadvantaged families. *Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews*, 12. PubMed abstract available at <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/22161419>.

Objectives	Determine the effects of home-based programs aimed specifically at improving developmental outcomes for preschool children from socially disadvantaged families.
Studies Included	Seven U.S. and International studies from 1973 to 1993
Participants in the Studies	Mothers aged 13–40 with children up to the age of 4 who were socially disadvantaged with respect to poverty, lone parenthood, or ethnic minority status
Settings	Settings were not reported for the studies.
Outcomes	<p>Primary child outcomes: children’s cognitive development (including language and attention) and socioemotional development (including self-regulation and behavioral development)</p> <p>Secondary child outcomes: physical development</p> <p>Secondary parent outcomes: parenting behavior, parenting attitudes, and quality of the home environment</p> <p>Adverse outcomes: parental disempowerment</p>
Limitations of the Studies	Lack of reporting on adverse effects; insufficient detail about methodology; unclear or high risk of bias, including lack of randomization to group, lack of blinding of participants, assessors, personnel; incomplete outcome data; attrition rates ranged across all seven studies, and it was impossible to tell whether attrition was greater in the intervention or the control group in three of the studies; no study reported undertaking an intent-to-treat analysis; the most recent study was completed 18 years ago

Results

The seven studies that met inclusion criteria for this review were randomized controlled trials that compared home-based preschool child development interventions with a “standard care” control in children from socially disadvantaged families. This systematic review defined socially disadvantaged by low maternal educational attainment and at least one of the following: living below the poverty line, living in rented accommodations, and/or having an occupational level no higher than semiskilled.

Overall, there is no evidence of the effectiveness of home-based interventions that specifically target the improvement of developmental outcomes for preschool children from socially disadvantaged families.

Four studies measured cognitive development and were synthesized into a meta-analysis. Results indicated that compared to the control group, there was no significant impact of the intervention on children’s cognitive development. Only three studies reported on socioemotional outcomes, and there were insufficient data to combine these and other outcomes into a meta-analysis. None of the studies reported on the adverse outcome of parental disempowerment.