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BOYS TOWN
National Research Institute
for Child and Family Studies

APPLIED RESEARCH
BIBLIOGRAPHY
This is an annotated bibliography of Boys Town research published from 1991 to 2016. (Some articles contain the phrase “Girls and Boys Town.” Boys Town used this title from 2000 through 2007 when referring to its program-related services.)

The bibliography contains 462 citations and is categorized according to the major types of service programs offered by Boys Town (i.e., Integrated Continuum of Care). While some of our applied research has been directed at areas that do not fall into categories related to these services, these studies have provided some of the foundational work important for research on our own interventions. These areas are listed under the category “Other Research” in the Table of Contents.

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Applied Research: A Bibliography of Boys Town Studies

Introduction
by
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Located in the Village of Boys Town, Nebraska, the Boys Town National Research Institute for Child and Family Studies conducts applied research that is focused on understanding the nature of problems children and their families face in today's world and identifying the most effective ways to help them. While many are aware of the quality care provided by Boys Town, some may not know of the extensive research we have conducted to inform our practice models. Boys Town is committed to combining quality care, love, and respect for children and families with sound, research-based practice. To put our current work in perspective, we offer a brief history of the Boys Town Model of Care and the research related to ongoing development and scale up at Boys Town sites.

The Boys Town Model of Care is an adaptation of the Teaching-Family Model developed in an applied research center at the University of Kansas. Boys Town was the first large replication of the program outside of the development site at the university. Applied research has continued at Boys Town with an emphasis on the identification and refinement of interventions for children and families. Research at Boys Town began in 1980 with a long-term, quasi-experimental study about the Family Home Program. Over 500 youth in that study were followed into adulthood to test long-term outcomes. Next a series of studies were conducted to adapt and evaluate the Teaching-Family Model to residential treatment centers, short-term residential care, foster care, parent training, positive behavior support in schools, and in-home services. That was followed by practical program evaluation studies focused on scale up of these programs at Boys Town sites and beyond.

More recently, with the growing emphasis on evidence-based practices, a series of large, rigorous studies are being conducted to evaluate the evidence base for these programs. Along the way, we have also continued to support ongoing program development and refine methods to facilitate program scale up with model fidelity. Finally, our most recent research also focuses on identification of risk and protective factors that influence child and family well-being in addition to testing intervention effectiveness and broad scale implementation. Current research has been disseminated in 50 published journal articles or book chapters and 25 presentations given at professional conferences in 2016 alone. Our research would be considered translational science, which has an emphasis on collaboration between researchers and practitioners toward the goal of translating research into real-world practice.

Additions to this 2016 edition include articles about some of this recent research. For example, Common Sense Parenting was tested as a community prevention program for at-risk students entering high school. On the Way Home is being tested to see if a combination of school and family support after a stay in therapeutic residential care will improve long-term outcomes. The In-Home Family Services program is being tested to see if providing family centered parenting along with social and concrete supports will help reduce parenting stress, improve parenting skills, reduce child behavior problems, and prevent child abuse and neglect for at risk families. The Parent Connectors program is being tested to see if veteran parents can help other parents engage in services and increase their support system in the community. All of these programs have shown positive results in preliminary studies and they are now being tested in scientifically rigorous trials to evaluate their evidence base and discover new intervention and implementation methods which may be helpful. This edition also includes a number of
articles about psychosocial development and risk. These studies help us understand the development of risk and protective factors and inform promising approaches for intervention.

We also continue to do studies and publish papers about our flagship intervention, the Family Home Program. Residential care has come under attack from segments of both the scientific community and public policy agencies. The predominant public policy is now focused on reducing the length of stay or eliminating stays in residential care and in its place providing treatment to at-risk children and families in foster care or their own homes. We are sympathetic to this viewpoint but also suggest that some at-risk youth can benefit from high quality therapeutic residential care. Residential care models, however, need to have demonstrated evidence to produce positive outcomes for at-risk youth and their families, and children need an adequate dose as well as family and school support after they depart to have lasting results. Our research about the Family Home Program has been used to advocate for high quality therapeutic residential care for some youth. We are also pursuing opportunities to conduct more rigorous studies to continue to provide scientific evidence for therapeutic residential care to inform policy and practice. Finally, in our collaboration with the Center for Neurobehavioral Research at the Boys Town National Research Hospital, Boys Town scientists have begun to identify biological and behavioral markers for adolescent behavior problems with the goal that this will lead to new knowledge about the etiology of behavior problems, as well as broaden the range of effective interventions.

This 2016 edition of the Research Bibliography includes citations and abstracts for 462 published or in press articles about this applied research at Boys Town over the past three decades. Just as applied research has played a vital role in the development of all Boys Town programs in the past, future program development, evaluation, and dissemination will involve the best of both informed practice and sound applied research. There will be an ongoing emphasis on rigorous evaluation of interventions for children and their families, and these evidence-based practices will be disseminated to Boys Town sites and other providers. This will require external validation of our research and practice models through federal and private research grants, continued publication of findings in the professional literature, and presentations at professional and scientific meetings. Finally, there will be an even stronger emphasis on prevention in the future, and this also will include an increased emphasis on prevention science. It is impossible to help all at-risk youth and their families through treatment programs, so it will be crucial to continue to refine an integrated continuum of evidence-based intervention and prevention programs (see figure below) that can provide the right service, in the right place, and at the right time.

![Boys Town Integrated Continuum of Care](image-url)
Residential Treatment Center

The Boys Town Residential Treatment Center is changing the lives of children ages 5 to 18 who have severe behavioral and mental health problems through a proven medically-directed treatment program. Our goal is to help children gain the self-assurance and academic and social skills to succeed in life. The Residential Treatment Center at Boys Town National Research Hospital is part of the nationally recognized Boys Town integrated system of child and family services. The Center is licensed by the Nebraska Department of Health and accredited by The Joint Commission. Our treatment program is specifically designed to offer medically-directed care for more seriously troubled youth who require supervision, safety and therapy but do not require inpatient psychiatric care. The program offers around-the-clock supervision, locked facilities and numerous other safety and program features.


This chapter will briefly summarize the research and concerns regarding the use of psychotropic medications for youth, address research and issues specific to residential programs, discuss youth and family involvement in decisions about the use of medications, and identify best practices in the use of psychotropic medications during residential interventions for youth. Copyright © 2014 Taylor & Francis.


The use of psychotropic medications in youth has significantly increased in recent years. Moreover, the use of multiple medications, or polypharmacy, has seen a corresponding increase. The use of medications is largely based on diagnostic impressions and the targeted symptom. However, due to the dearth of applied research with severely troubled youth, there is very little “evidence base” to guide this practice. The Survey of Adolescent Treatment Experience study surveyed youth, currently placed in residential care, on their impressions of medication effectiveness on a wide-range of symptom categories. Youth report only mediocre effectiveness in their medication across a range of symptom questions. Approximately one third of youth indicated that they felt positive about taking medications. On average, slightly less than 50 % of youth reported benefits from medications across symptom categories. It is argued that these findings should inform the efforts toward individualized treatment models. Copyright © 2014 Springer.


Medication rates in behaviorally disordered children and youth have greatly increased to current high levels and are very controversial. This study examined changes in psychotropic medication use, levels of behavioral disturbance, and use of personal restraint and seclusion in a population of youth with serious behavioral disorders receiving medically directed cognitive-behavioral treatment in an intensive residential setting. The hypothesis was that there would be significant reductions in medication rates, without the unintended consequences of increased rates of problem behavior or offsetting increases in the use of seclusion or personal restraint. Results showed significant reductions in both the number of youth on medication and the average number of psychotropic medications during the residential stay. There were also significant reductions in behavioral disturbance, seclusions, and personal restraints. These results demonstrate that psychotropic medication can be significantly reduced without increases in problem behavior or the use of seclusions or personal restraints. We conclude that it is possible to significantly reduce psychotropic medication rates to far more conservative levels within the context of a clinically directed cognitive-behavioral treatment milieu. Copyright © 2014 Springer.
Increasing numbers of younger children are entering intensive residential treatment, but most programs were developed for older children. This study compares preadolescent and adolescent children in a residential treatment program across a broad range of behavioral, emotional, and medical measures. This study examined data for 693 children consecutively admitted to a psychiatric residential treatment facility between January 2005 and December 2010. Data included problems at admission, early problem behavior in program, use of seclusion and restraint, health care and psychological services utilization, psychotropic medications, and length of stay. Generally, preadolescents were more behaviorally and emotionally troubled than were adolescents. Adolescents had higher medical care utilization rates. Results highlight the need for designing and implementing treatment programs tailored to meet the differing needs of preadolescent and adolescent children. Copyright © 2014 Routledge.

Over the past decade, the level of clinical needs of youth in residential treatment has increased significantly. Youth in out-of-home settings typically experience higher levels of psychotropic medication use than their peers living at home, even when controlling for the severity of clinical issues. The purpose of the current study was to examine the effects of an approach to clinically reassess psychotropic medication utilization for youth residing in residential treatment settings while also observing the impact on the youth's need for physical containment. Medication changes were based on a data-informed process, using input from a multi-disciplinary treatment team. Data for 531 youth who were consecutively admitted to one of two non-affiliated intensive residential treatment programs, one in the Midwest and one in New England, was analyzed. Over half of these youth (n=292, 55%) had their medications reduced during their stay and only 14% (n=76) were prescribed more medication at discharge than they had been taking at admission. The remainder either saw no change during their stay (n=104, 20%) or were never on medication at any time (n=59, 11%). From admission to discharge there was a 62% decrease in the number of assaultive incidents as well as a 72% decrease in the use of physical restraints. These results support the view that residential treatment can provide a treatment milieu that allows for thoughtful reassessment of the clinical basis for behavioral disorders in children that can achieve the dual goals of medication reduction and behavioral stabilization. Copyright © 2013 Elsevier Ltd.

This study examined the relationship between gender, abuse history, and clinical change in a residential treatment program for youth with emotional and behavioral disturbance. Admission data and data collected after 1 year of treatment or at discharge were examined for 1,303 youth. Measures included the Suicide Probability Scale, Child Behavior Checklist, and the Diagnostic Interview Schedule for Children. Data also included medication count, demographic data, and history of sexual or physical abuse or both. At intake, girls scored significantly more pathologically than boys on 9 out of 12 measures. At intake, abused youth indicated more hostility, anxiety, and mood disorder symptoms as well as psychotropic medication usage than nonabused youth. Youth improved significantly on all outcome measures with treatment, although interaction effects indicate some differing treatment responses by abuse history or gender. After treatment, girls still scored significantly higher than boys on 6 of 8 outcome measures, and abused youth, especially youth experiencing both sexual and physical abuse, had significantly higher anxiety, affective, behavior, and eating disorder symptom counts and were on more psychotropic medications than nonabused youth. Although behaviorally focused treatment was associated with improvement on every measure, the most important implication of our study is that a singular treatment approach does not fit all youth completely as reflected by continuing treatment needs in our most troubled youth. Additional symptom-focused treatment and research attention must be given to girls and
abused youth in residential care to maximize their therapeutic outcomes. Copyright © 2012 American Orthopsychiatric Association.


Youth entering residential treatment often present with complex mental health and behavioral needs. As a result, it is not surprising that many of these youth have active prescriptions for psychotropic medications. What is surprising, however, is that very little is known about how psychotropic medications are used for youth who enter residential treatment. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to gain a better understanding of psychotropic medication use for youth at their time of entry to residential treatment through the examination of archival data. Data suggested that the youth in this sample had high levels of emotional and behavioral difficulties and that many had active psychotropic prescriptions. Patterns of use differed slightly from those identified with previous samples, but several clinical and non-clinical factors were identified that were predictive of psychotropic medication use. Findings and implications are discussed in detail. Copyright © 2012 Elsevier Ltd.


Safety of staff and youth in out-of-home care and treatment settings has become a topic of national concern. Injuries, and in rare cases, even deaths have occurred when youth have been restrained in out-of-home care settings. In this chapter the authors identify the elements of an effective, harm-free treatment environment and describe an organizational case study of the application of these elements in a treatment group home setting. The case study involves a refinement and adjustment of some of these elements following a program leadership change. Copyright © 2008 Child Welfare League of America.


This is a summary of the reliability and validity of the Treatment Progress Checklist, a daily symptom checklist designed for out-of-home placements in behavioral health and treatment foster care. The best 34 core items were selected from 52 items in a previous version based on perceived clinical usefulness, frequency of occurrence, and factor analysis. The following five clusters of five or six items were based on the factor analysis: Aggression, Covert, Hyperactivity, Internalizing, and Oppositional. The Checklist was made more clinically useful by adding program-specific items as needed, by adding clinically relevant events, and by improving the computer program for graphical trend reports. A during-treatment assessment like this Checklist is useful to clinical supervisors for treatment planning and advocating for the youth to other stakeholders. Copyright © 2002 The de la Parte Institute.


In 2000, the New York State Office of Mental Health requested that Girls and Boys Town train the staff at Rockland Children’s Psychiatric Center in the Girls and Boys Town Psychoeducational Model (PEM). The PEM was chosen largely because of its emphasis on teaching patients to substitute positive self-control strategies in place of angry, aggressive outbursts. Incident data indicated a pre-PEM to post-PEM implementation reduction in aggressive behaviors and a self-reported increase in the use of self-calming strategies, cooperation skills, and consumer satisfaction. Maintenance of these improvements will require
ongoing PEM training, skill practice, and consistent supervision from all those in leadership positions. Copyright © 2002 The Gale Group, Inc.


Pre-treatment and post-treatment data was collected from adolescent clients of a new residential treatment center at Girls and Boys Town. Youth who received treatment improved significantly on the Child Behavior Checklist and the Children’s Global Assessment Scale and were maintaining their treatment gains at follow-up. Ten months following discharge, the majority were stabilized and functioning adequately in school and with their primary caregiver. For these youth, residential treatment succeeded where other interventions failed. Copyright © 2001 Springer Publishing.


This article summarizes how a residential treatment center on the East Coast modified its treatment approach by adopting Girls and Boys Town’s Psychoeducational Model (PEM). Several features of the PEM were considered relevant to improving treatment. The center tracked 19 problem behaviors during the transition to the PEM Model. Only one behavior increased significantly, whereas eight decreased significantly. Examples included a 90% decrease in runaways and a 29% decrease in physical assaults against staff. Copyright © 2001 The Gale Group, Inc.


As a contrast to more common evaluation measures, this study illustrates the multiple ways that daily symptom checklists can be used. Graphs of daily symptoms can be used for individual youth’s treatment planning, utilization reviews, and other clinical decisions. After being aggregated over all youth, data can show overall trends in symptom rates in a treatment facility, including differential trends by types of youth. The first example is illustrated with a rise and fall in aggregated symptom rates during the first year of a new treatment group home. The second example is illustrated with differential symptom trends for boys according to how long they remained in treatment. Copyright © 2000 The de la Parte Institute.


This paper summarizes the initial evaluation data from Boys Town’s Intensive Residential Treatment Center. On average, youth reported being satisfied or completely satisfied with the treatment at the time of their discharge. During treatment, their externalizing problem behaviors and attention problems both decreased significantly. The sharpest decrease in aggressive symptoms during treatment occurred for youth who had been the most aggressive prior to treatment. We are encouraged by this initial evidence of the effectiveness of the Intensive Residential Treatment Center. Copyright © 1999 The de la Parte Institute.

A well-specified residential treatment model is described, and preliminary outcome data are presented. The Boys Town Psychoeducational Model (PEM) empowers direct-care staff to be important treatment agents by training them to use systematic teaching techniques. Data obtained on youth served at the center since its inception in December 1995 indicate that the youth have had multiple prior placements and serious psychiatric disorders. The Model sustains an active and positive treatment environment as documented by high levels of focused treatment occurring during the youths’ stay. To date, 94% of the youth have departed to placements that were equal to, or less restrictive than, their placements at admission to the program. Of those who had Children’s Global Assessment Scale (CGAS) ratings both at admission and discharge, 84% (n = 21) of the youth had better functioning at discharge. Copyright © 1998 Springer Publishing.


The usual evaluation measures provide little information about how to improve treatment overall or with a particular youth. In contrast, tracking daily symptoms is useful for a variety of purposes. First, it can be used for treatment planning for individual youth, such as determining whether or not a current medication protocol is working. Second, trends in daily symptoms can support providers’ advocating for extended payment from managed care organizations when appropriate. Finally, symptom trends can sometimes be helpful in determining appropriate post-discharge placement. If home visits are consistently followed by a sharp increase in severe symptoms, then permanent placement into that home may be premature. Copyright © 1998 The Alliance for Children and Families


This study assessed the effect of the Boys Town Psychoeducational Treatment Model on the therapeutic milieu of a state-operated psychiatric hospital serving children and adolescents. Direct-care staff from two units for adolescents and one unit for children were trained to implement the Model, which guides staff in planned and spontaneous interactions with patients. Patients rated their satisfaction with direct-care staff immediately before the Model was implemented and one year later. Staff perceptions of changes in the treatment environments were assessed by retrospective interviews. Patients in two of the three units indicated significantly greater satisfaction with direct-care staff after the Psychoeducational Treatment Model was implemented. Results from retrospective interviews with staff showed statistically significant improvements in their perceptions of the therapeutic milieu. Staff comments recorded during the interview supported the quantitative results. Training direct-care staff at a children’s psychiatric hospital to use the Boys Town Psychoeducational Treatment Model significantly improved perceptions of the therapeutic milieu among both staff and patients. Copyright © 1993 American Psychiatric Association.
Boys Town’s Intervention and Assessment Services® provide emergency, short-term, 24-hour care in a residential setting for boys and girls ages 10 to 18. Many have been abused and/or neglected, are runaways or have come through the juvenile justice system. When youth enter these services, professionally trained staff members begin assessing their safety, health and service needs in order to determine and plan for the best permanent care arrangement. The primary goals at this level of service are to remove youth from dangerous situations and/or provide temporary care. Every child receives an immediate behavioral intervention, and may also receive additional clinical assessments based on his or her needs and the desire of the referral source. Staff members also teach youth social skills, ensure that they continue going to school and work with youth (and when possible, their families) to develop individualized, skill-focused service plans that address behavior problem areas. Whenever possible, staff members help youth work toward reunification with their family. When children leave, they may move to another program in the Boys Town Integrated Continuum of Care, other outside programs, or return home to their families.


We describe a comprehensive program to train emergency shelter staff in effective methods for dealing with youth who have behavioral and emotional problems; assess the degree to which staff implemented the treatment approach; measure the impact of the intervention on shelter-wide incidents, such as out-of-control behavior, runaways, and violence against other youth; and examine pre-post changes in staff experiences at the shelter via anonymous surveys. Overall, the short-term shelter staff indicated adequate implementation of the intervention. The rate of youth incidents at the shelter significantly declined from pre to post assessment. Direct-care staff ratings of their satisfaction with their proficiency in behavior management and teaching youth skills increased significantly from pre to post implementation. These findings suggest that it is feasible to deliver an effective staff-training program to improve the behavior management and social skills of youth residing in short-term care facilities within the child welfare system. Copyright © 2006 Human Sciences Press, Inc.


Youth discharged from a short-term residential facility and reunified with their parents were contacted between one and three years after discharge to determine whether or not the youth had a subsequent placement following reunification. Of the 148 youth who reunified with their parents, 110 (74%) were contacted. Risk factors were identified by using survival analysis techniques to analyze differences in the time to the first subsequent placement. The number of self-reported personal problems reported at intake significantly predicted a shorter time to subsequent placement disruption. There was also a trend (p = .12) for the number of prior formal placements to predict future placements. Copyright © 2001 SAGE Publications, Inc.


Choosing appropriate program outcomes and indicators is a challenging task for administrators and evaluators. It is an even more daunting task when trying to identify relevant outcomes in programs in which the treatment is of very short duration. This article discusses the importance of examining program theory when selecting outcomes to measure in program evaluation. Copyright © 1999 The Alliance for Children and Families.

Youth discharged from a short-term residential facility and reunified with their parents were contacted at least one year after discharge to determine whether or not they had a disruption in their placement since reunification. Follow-up intervals of 149 youth contacted (82% of the eligible sample) ranged from a minimum of 12 months to a maximum of 30 months post-discharge. Differences in the time to placement disruption were analyzed using survival analysis techniques. After controlling for adjustment differences during the treatment program, youth behavior problems, and family problems, a significant interaction of youth age and treatment intensity was found. Compared to the others, younger youth who received additional treatment components had placement disruptions later and less frequently. Copyright © 1999 Human Sciences Press, Inc.


The purpose of this study was to examine the correlates of post-shelter maternal family satisfaction in a group of youth who were reunified with their families following a shelter stay. Findings indicated that higher ratings of family satisfaction were related to greater maternal problem-solving skills and less family conflict. Copyright © 1998 Human Sciences Press, Inc.


For 472 consecutive days we monitored the number of youth residing in a crisis shelter for adolescents, the average length of stay for the youth residing in the shelter on each day, and the number of problem behaviors occurring within the shelter on a daily basis. We analyzed these data using a combination of time series and logistic regression techniques to fit a model that would predict the occurrence of a problem behavior on any given day. After controlling for significant time trends in the data, our results indicate that both the number of youth in the shelter and the proportion of youth who have resided in the shelter longer than 14 days are significantly associated with a problem behavior occurring on any given day. The number of youth in the shelter and the probability of a problem behavior occurring correlated significantly. However, as the proportion of youth who resided in the shelter longer than 14 days increased, the probability of a problem behavior occurring decreased. Copyright © 1995 Human Sciences Press, Inc.


The idea of sentencing juvenile offenders to military-style “boot camps” has been highly popular with the public and with many politicians. But how effective are such programs and how do they measure up when recidivism rates are the outcome of interest? This article examines some of the pros and cons of the boot camp philosophy, citing research on whether or not such camps achieved the desired results. Copyright © 1994 The Alliance for Children and Families.


Changes in placement restrictiveness, as a function of problem type and severity, were examined in a sample of 154 children departing a shelter for runaway and homeless youth. Six problem types were identified using a principal components analysis of youth-reported personal and family problems. Four of the six factors obtained represented youth problem types interpreted as reflecting antisocial/conduct problems, victimization by abuse, risk of suicide, and rebellious youth behaviors. The two remaining problem types were interpreted as a chaotic/aggressive family type and a mixed pattern of youth aggression and parental skill deficiency. An analysis of the problem types indicated that youth at higher risk for suicide, and those who came from more dysfunctional families, departed to living environments that were more restrictive than their placements at entry. Copyright © 1994 Human Sciences Press, Inc.

Evidence of treatment implementation in a short-term emergency shelter program for runaway and homeless youth is presented. An examination of data collected from 100 youth consecutively admitted to the program indicated high frequencies of teaching interactions across a range of social skills, high levels of satisfaction with the program, and relatively low frequencies of negative/disruptive behaviors by the youth during their stays in the shelter. Copyright © 1994 Child Welfare League of America.


Factors associated with family reunification following a short-term stay in a shelter for runaway and troubled youth were examined. Children who were not reunified with their caretakers following their stay reported more family problems, appeared to be at higher risk of suicide, and stayed longer in the shelter. Implications for delivery of shelter service programs are discussed. Copyright © 1992 American Orthopsychiatric Association, Inc.
Family Home Program

At this service level, youth with serious behavioral or emotional problems live in a family-style home and receive teaching and care from professionally trained married couples called Family-Teachers®. Six to eight boys or girls, usually ages 10 to 18, live in each home. The couple and a full-time Assistant Family-Teacher® are responsible for providing structured supervision for youth in their daily living and care activities. This includes meeting the educational, medical, psychological, emotional and behavioral needs of the youth in care. A major focus of this program is teaching youth social, independent-living and educational skills, and helping them build healthy relationships with others. With a focus on reunification, the Family-Teaching staff works with families to achieve permanency, safety and child well-being. When children leave, they generally return to their families or begin to live on their own (usually working, attending college or joining the military).

In Press


There is a gap in understanding how the treatment fidelity aspects of adherence and quality, along with common process factors such as therapeutic alliance, impact outcomes for youth. Few studies have examined both constructs of implementation and process factors simultaneously in regard to their relationship to client outcomes. This study examined the role of (a) youth ratings of implementation quality for a provider of therapeutic residential care, (b) the records of staff ratios of positive to negative statements to youth as reported for a token economy system, and (c) youth ratings of therapeutic alliance in relation to youth emotional and behavioral functioning at 6 months into therapeutic residential services. The study included data collection activities with 112 youth and staff at intake into residential group care through 6 months into residential services. Both youth ratings of therapeutic alliance and the ratio of positive to negative staff interactions with youth were related to improved youth emotional and behavioral functioning, as reported by staff using the Child Behavior Checklist. These findings suggest that it is important to consider both implementation and common process factors when looking to improve the quality of care for youth in therapeutic residential care. Copyright © 2017 Hammill Institute on Disabilities.


High levels of psychotropic medication use and polypharmacy are common for emotionally and behaviorally troubled youth entering residential care. Polypharmacy has often been characterized as an especially serious problem in this vulnerable population. Latent Class Analysis was used to identify medication subgroups for 636 youth in an intensive residential program. Additionally, auxiliary analyses (e.g., diagnoses, demographics, expressed problem behaviors) were used to identify the personal and behavioral attributes associated with individuals in each of the latent classes. Three distinct medication patterns emerged: low/no psychotropic medication, the combination of antidepressant and antipsychotic medications, and multiple psychotropic medications. The latent classes were significantly different from one another on 12 of the 14 variables, helping explicate how patient and clinical characteristics underlie patterns of psychotropic medication use. Findings of this study, combined with additional research, hold promise for leading to improved, youth-centered prescribing practices. Our findings also highlight the need for careful monitoring of the types and range of medications that some youth are prescribed, and research on how youth with certain background characteristics are more likely to get prescribed multiple psychotropic medications. For youth experiencing higher levels of psychotropic polypharmacy, medication regimens need thoughtful reassessment using the principle of sufficiency as the foundation for medication management. Copyright © 2017 Springer.
Using data from a U.S. survey of residential care providers on the utilization of evidence-based practices (EBPs) in residential care, this study examines outcomes, processes, and barriers related to the implementation of EBPs. Descriptive data on 115 EBPs implemented in 66 residential care agencies were analyzed with regard to multiple domains of implementation outcomes, such as the adoption, appropriateness, fidelity, and sustainability of EBPs. Study results showed that residential care programs are primarily implementing EBPs that target specific client problems and populations and address prevalent problems of trauma and emotional disorders. A low rate of utilization of milieu-based program models, which were specifically designed for residential care, was noted. Child care staff were mostly excluded from the training and delivery of EBPs. Although providers reported that implementation of EBPs yielded desired results, considerable barriers persisted. Fidelity data raised questions about the degree to which agencies are in fact implementing EBPs. Findings from this exploratory study are meant to encourage further inquiry of the conditions necessary in residential care programs to foster openness toward the implementation of EBPs and to achieve sustained success. Copyright © 2017 Hammill Institute on Disabilities.

Residential care has been criticized for its high cost and limited research evidence. While recent studies and reviews of the literature suggest that a number of evidence-based practices are being implemented in residential care settings, more research is needed to develop and test empirically based practices that can be successfully implemented in residential care. In this article, we offer a promising strategy to address this issue: a long-term research partnership between a large service provider agency and a university-based research center to conduct a program of research which has resulted in translation of evidence-supported practices into service provider programs, contributions to the science of residential care, and training opportunities for young applied scientists to specialize in this important work. This evolving program of research includes four core applied research topic areas in which this collaboration has had some ongoing success: program and practice implementation fidelity, therapeutic process factors, aftercare, and psychotropic medication use. We suggest that this type of long-term collaborative research partnership is an approach for others to consider for conducting research that informs effective residential care practices. Copyright © 2017 Hammill Institute on Disabilities.

Behavioral, social, emotional, and educational risks among children and youth with school identified disabilities served in residential care have been well documented. However, the health care needs and medical service utilization of this high-risk population are less well known. Given the risks associated with children with disabilities, one might expect that medical care usage is elevated and will continue to be a need when children return home or age out of the system. The purpose of this study was to evaluate if medical service utilization differed between youth with and without school-identified disabilities in care, and whether certain correlates (e.g., demographic characteristics and mental health functioning) would be associated with medical service use among youth with disabilities. Hierarchical multiple regression models were used to explore the role of disability status in the utilization of medical services as well as to predict the effects of mental health functioning on utilization while controlling for other known factors. Results indicated that medical service usage for youth with school identified disabilities was statistically higher than usage for peers without disabilities after accounting for other factors associated with utilization, and internalizing and externalizing behavior severity were significantly related to medical
service utilization for youth with disabilities. As expected, the findings suggest that youth with disabilities use more medical services than peers without disabilities regardless of the presence of a physical health condition, but might be due to differences in the severity of the physical health conditions. Copyright © 2016 Springer.


The objective of the study was to examine the link between therapeutic alliance and youth outcomes. The study was conducted at a group home with 112 youth with a disruptive-behavior diagnosis. Therapeutic alliance was collected routinely via youth and staff report. Outcome data were collected using youth and staff reports of externalizing behavior as well as behavioral incidents occurring during care. Outcome data were collected following intake into services and at 6 and 12 months of care. Data were analyzed to examine (a) whether youth behavior problems at intake were predictive of therapeutic alliance and (b) whether changes in alliance were predictive of subsequent youth outcomes. These were conducted with a 6-month service-delivery model and replicated with a 12-month model. There was some support for the first hypothesis, that initial levels of youth externalizing behavior would be related to alliance ratings; however, most of the effects were marginally significant. The second hypothesis, that changes in therapeutic alliance would be related to subsequent youth outcomes, was supported for the 6-month model, but not the 12-month model. Changes in therapeutic alliance may be predictive of youth outcomes during care. Additional research into examining therapeutic alliance trajectories is warranted to improve mental health services for youth. Copyright © 2014 Hammill Institute on Disabilities.


This study used point card information from a residential program to generate treatment fidelity metrics and determine if the metrics predicted youth outcomes after six months in care. Youth outcomes included staff (n = 52) and youth (n = 143) ratings, youth conduct records kept by the residential program's teaching-family homes and school records. Treatment fidelity metrics included the program components: (a) percentage of positive interactions, (b) number of privileges earned, and (c) a skills taught to interactions ratio. The percentage of positive interactions averaged 90% per youth; 76% of the point cards indicated that privileges were earned; and a variety of life skills were typically taught to the youth (skills ratio = .61). The data from the treatment fidelity metrics supported that the program was implemented consistent with program expectations. The range of implementation quality for each measured component was then used to predict youth outcomes. Increased percent of positive interactions predicted significantly decreased externalizing behaviors as reported by staff ($\beta = -0.31, p < .001$) and youth ($\beta = -0.30, p < .001$), and significantly fewer incidents of non-compliance ($Exp(b) = 0.93, p < .001$) and school problems ($Exp(b) = 0.91, p < .001$) as indicated on the program records. The skills ratio indicated similar trends across outcomes, although non-significant at the $p < .01$ level. Permanent products may be helpful to develop program treatment fidelity metrics, which may be useful for monitoring implementation and may be associated with improved youth outcomes. Copyright © 2015 Elsevier Ltd.

The relationship between physical distance to program, different types of family contact, and youth behavioral outcomes, discharge assessment, and 6-month follow-up was examined. Data came from clinical record information for 350 youth who had been admitted to a group home program between July 2009 and October 2011. Path analysis was used to examine the hypothesized pattern of interrelationships among the variables. Study results found that home visits of youth with their families were related to better outcomes, while program visits by family were unrelated to outcomes. Phone contacts during the week were also unrelated to youth outcomes, whereas weekend phone contacts were significantly related to less successful outcomes. Findings suggest that family contact is important for the health and wellbeing of youth in residential care, but that not all family/friend contacts are equally beneficial and that some can even undermine a youth’s progress. Specific recommendations are made for future research to inform practice on how to make the most of these opportunities. Ultimately, all family and friend contact should be a positive factor in the youth’s treatment and outcomes. Copyright © 2015 Taylor & Francis.


This study reports on results of a national survey conducted in the United States about the attitudes, perceptions, and utilization of evidence-based practices (EBPs) in residential care settings. Seventy-five of 118 member agencies (63.6% response rate) of a voluntary national residential care association responded to a web-administered structured survey, which included the Evidence-Based Practices Attitude Scale. Results show overwhelmingly positive attitudes toward EBPs. Concerns were reported mainly with regard to cost and impeding a client-driven practice approach. The study also showed a high degree of utilization of EBPs with over 88% of programs reporting the use of at least one practice they considered to be evidence-based. Altogether 53 different practices were reported although it is unknown at this point whether practices were delivered with fidelity. Behaviorally-based and trauma-focused interventions constituted the most common interventions used by residential care agencies. Practices were subsequently validated against four national clearinghouse sites, indicating that only slightly over half of all reported practices had been evaluated by at least one clearinghouse and rated as having some research evidence for effectiveness. Divergent views about what practices are evidence-based point to the need for continued discussion between the practice and research fields about conceptualizations of evidence. Copyright © 2015 Taylor & Francis.


Little is known about the prevalence of clinical weight problems for youth living in residential care. Therefore, this study examined the prevalence and correlates of overweight and obesity in a large sample of youth (N = 1709) entering a residential care program. Results indicated that 48% of youth were overweight or obese at the time of intake, which is much higher than national pediatric rates. Females had higher rates of overweight/obesity, as did youth referred from moderately restrictive placements such as foster care. Youth who were overweight/obese had greater internalizing symptoms at intake. Clinical and research implications are discussed. Copyright © 2015 Taylor & Francis.


**Background.** Each year a number of youth with a school identified disability are placed in residential care. It has been well documented that these youth enter with elevated rates of behavioral, emotional, educational, mental health, and familial challenges. However, the physical and medical condition of these youth remains unstudied. **Objective.** The purpose of the present study was to determine the prevalence of health and medical problems among a group of youth with school identified disabilities at entrance to a residential care center. **Methods.** Archival medical, demographic, and disability status data were obtained for 346 youth served in a large residential care center in the Midwest. Chi-square and correlation tests, and relative risk ratio estimates, were used to evaluate the relationship between medical condition and hypothesized correlates. **Results.** Findings revealed that over one-third of the sample had at least one medical condition, with asthma being the most prevalent (15.6%). Rates of medical condition differed by disability type and prevalence of asthma differed by race/ethnicity. **Conclusions.** Youth with a school identified disability in care demonstrate health care needs that need to be addressed while in care and following community reintegration. Intervention programs and targeted curriculum are needed to teach youth how to manage their health specific needs and how to independently navigate the health care system. Copyright © 2015 Elsevier Inc.


Adolescents in residential care settings have double the national average of suicide risk histories (attempts, threats, and ideation). However, little is known about youth with specific suicide-risk histories. This study explored differences in demographic characteristics and mental health variables for 509 youth in residential care with high and low suicide-risk histories. Overall, nearly 40% of participants had a high suicide-risk history, and significant differences between low and high suicide-risk history groups were found for multiple variables (e.g., gender, ethnicity, number of diagnoses). This study highlights a need for research into areas associated with suicide-risk history in residential care. Copyright © 2014 Routledge.


This study examined characteristics and biopsychosocial predictors of nonsuicidal self-injury in a sample (N= 753) of youth in residential care admitted between 2005 and 2010. To model the data, the authors used t-tests, chi-square tests, and multiple logistic regressions stratified by gender. Results suggested that 12% of youth engaged in nonsuicidal self-injury during treatment. The authors identified no significant difference between the prevalence of nonsuicidal self-injury and demographic information. Results from multiple logistic regression analyses identified that aggression, prior self-harm, and age at placement significantly contributed to nonsuicidal self-injury during residential care. Boys with elevated levels of aggression and a history of prior self-harm and younger girls with elevated aggression were at increased risk of nonsuicidal self-injury during treatment. These findings suggest a 2–3 variable model for classifying youth as being at risk for engaging in nonsuicidal self-injury in residential treatment. Furthermore, prevalence estimates of nonsuicidal self-injury among adolescents in residential treatment are similar to rates obtained from nonclinical community samples. Implications, limitations, and future directions of these findings are discussed. Copyright © 2013 Taylor & Francis Group, LLC.

Research has shown that between 40 and 98% of youth entering residential treatment are taking at least one psychotropic medication and that psychotropic medication management is often an integral component of treatment in residential settings. To determine physician opinion about the difficulty of managing psychotropic medications for youth in residential treatment and to determine the resources that are used in the process, a survey study was conducted. Overall, physicians indicated that youth involved in residential settings were much more complex than those in traditional outpatient settings, due to multiple mental health diagnoses, polypharmacy, and unknown treatment histories. They also reported that many existing resources are not applicable to youth, particularly those in residential settings, and that they are difficult to read and interpret. Copyright © 2013 Springer.


This article serves as an introduction to a Special Issue focused on the use of psychotropic medication with children and youth identified with psychiatric disorders and emotional and behavioral disturbance. In this editorial, we provide a brief summary of why research examining psychotropic medication use for children and youth is increasingly important and a brief background on what research to date has identified. We also provide a brief description of the manuscripts selected for inclusion in this Special Issue. Copyright © 2014 Springer.


Research has indicated that youth eligible for special education services in residential centers are at an increased risk across many areas including overall health, medication use, academic, behavioral, and familial functioning. Yet it remains unknown how well they are able to read, understand, and use health-related information. The purpose of this study was to investigate the health literacy status of youth receiving special education (N= 61) services at a large residential care facility in the Midwest. Results indicate youth with disabilities are at increased risk of low health literacy in areas of reading recognition and comprehension. Specifically, well over 50% of the sample scored in the possible to likely limited health literacy level. Study limitations, future research, and implications are provided. Copyright © 2014 Siauliai University.


The purpose of this article is to describe the health-related quality of life (HRQoL) of adolescents in residential care and to examine selected correlates. A sample of 229 adolescents (mean age = 17 years) living in a residential care setting completed a validated measure of HRQoL (PedsQL 4.0 Generic Scales). Mean-level scores for Total HRQoL, Physical HRQoL, and Psychosocial HRQoL were examined, and the percentage of youth scoring below a clinical cutoff value was reported. Demographic and psychotropic medication data for each youth were accessed from an electronic database maintained by the residential care program and used to examine correlates of HRQoL. Approximately 25% of youth had at least 1 HRQoL score in the “at risk” range, indicating a significant proportion of youth in residential care have significant impairments in HRQoL. Younger age and female gender were associated with poorer HRQoL. Psychotropic medication prescriptions were associated with poorer HRQoL. A significant percentage of adolescents in residential care may experience suboptimal HRQoL, and certain demographic and clinical factors appear to be associated with greater risk. Systematic assessment of HRQoL is recommended for youth in residential care, and interventions to promote better HRQoL among youth at particularly high risk may be beneficial. (PsycINFO Database Record (c) 2014 APA, all rights reserved).

The purpose of this study was to compare parent (N = 51) and family teacher (N = 102) ratings of perceptions of aftercare for youth reintegrating into the home and community settings following a stay in residential care. The results show large differences between treatment providers and parents as to the level of youth preparedness for transition. Youth leaving residential care facilities struggle to maintain the gains they make during their time in treatment. Understanding what residential care providers and parents of youth perceive to be most important for youth during this transition period is essential to the youth’s long-term success. Copyright © 2014 by SAGE Publications.


Although previous studies have demonstrated that children in out-of-home care present with elevated levels of mental and physical health, educational, and behavioral problems, little is known about youth’s ability to manage health care needs or access health information and support. This study evaluates the health literacy skills of 229 youth served in a residential setting. Results revealed that the majority of youth demonstrated some level of risk, and anywhere from one-quarter to one-third demonstrated significant health literacy deficits suggesting a need for additional research and treatment intervention. Implications, study limitations, and recommendations for practice and future research are discussed. Copyright © 2014 Routledge.


The prevalence of weight problems among youth in general and youth in out-of-home care has been well documented; however, the prevalence of obesity/overweight among youth with high-incidence disabilities in more restrictive settings, such as residential care, has not been assessed. The purpose of the present study was to evaluate the prevalence of weight problems in 245 youth with learning disabilities or emotional disturbance at entrance to residential care. Youth intake files were examined to evaluate the association between youth demographic characteristics, medical conditions, prior placements and placement settings, medication usage, and internalizing and externalizing behavioral problems and clinical weight problems. Findings revealed that over one half of the youth were overweight or obese (50.6%), and weight problems were associated with gender, medical conditions, and age. Study limitations, future research efforts, and treatment implications are discussed. Copyright © 2014 Council for Exceptional Children.


In addition to complex behavioral and emotional issues, youth presenting to residential care tend to have higher rates of physical health conditions than those in the general population. Although a strong body of research has found a relationship between physical and mental health, the influence of health status on youth residential care outcomes has not been explored. This study examined the impact of poor physical health on mental health treatment outcomes in a sample of 1,735 youth entering residential care from 2000 to 2010. At intake, youth received medical evaluations identifying physical health conditions, medication prescriptions, and anthropometric measurements. Residential care outcomes were measured by changes in 1-year National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) Diagnostic Interview Schedule for Children—IV mental health diagnoses and discharge setting. Rates of school dropout and placement stability were also examined 6 months after discharge. Results suggest that factors related to poor physical health, specifically nonpsychotropic medication prescriptions, are associated with suboptimal
mental health outcomes at 1 year, discharge, and follow-up from residential care. These findings indicate that physical health issues adversely impact residential care outcomes, suggesting these youth may require specialized services, such as integrated treatment planning, to achieve optimal treatment outcomes. Copyright © 2013 Hammill Institute on Disabilities.


Minimal attention has been focused on difficulties for youth in residential care regarding building healthy dating relationships, despite the significant risks to this group of adolescents. This study provided a unique opportunity to conduct focus groups with youth in residential care on issues surrounding dating relationships. The majority of youth feedback centered on the themes of desiring support developing relationship boundaries, establishing trust in relationships, understanding the consequences of sexual activity, and having real world examples regarding dating relationships. The data were examined for differences between the genders and recommendations for next steps provided. Copyright © 2013 Taylor & Francis Group, LLC.


Minimal research has focused on the health literacy status of adolescents, and few measures have been validated among specific subgroups of youth. One such group is youth living in residential treatment centers. It is currently unknown how well this group is able to read, understand, and use health-related information. The purpose of this study was to assess the psychometric properties of three widely-used health literacy measures among a group of youth at a large residential care facility located in Omaha, NE. Results indicate that all measures are psychometrically adequate for use among this population. Study limitations and implications are provided. Copyright © 2014 InfinityPress.Info.


Purpose. Alcohol use disorder (AUD) and cannabis use disorder (CUD) are prevalent among high-risk adolescents, such as those referred for residential care. These disorders are often comorbid, and comorbidity is associated with heightened adverse consequences compared with each disorder alone. Little is known about factors that are associated with the development of comorbid AUD and CUD. This study tested individual, family, peer, school, and community variables as common versus specific correlates of singular and comorbid AUDs and CUDs among high-risk youth. Methods. Participants were 1,662 youth at entry into a large residential group home program. The average age of participants was 15.2 years, and 63% were male. Routine intake assessments, including standardized questionnaires (e.g., Diagnostic Interview Schedule for Children) and structured checklists, provided archival data for the analyses, conducted using multinomial logistic regression (with neither disorder as the reference group). Results. Male gender was a specific positive correlate of CUD-only. Several common positive correlates of the disorder groups were identified, including individual (e.g., anxiety/depression), family (e.g., family history of substance use), peer (e.g., hanging around troubled peers), and school (e.g., truancy) variables. Age at intake and troubled peers had stronger positive associations with comorbid AUD and CUD than with either disorder alone. Conclusions. Many more common than specific correlates were identified; these variables may be associated with generalized risk for substance use disorders. Two variables were particularly strong positive correlates of comorbid AUD and CUD, and potentially could be targeted in interventions designed to prevent comorbid substance use disorders. Copyright © 2013 Society for Adolescent Health and Medicine.

Youth in residential treatment settings often present with a complex combination of mental and physical health problems. Despite an emerging literature documenting significant associations between mental health and physical health, the relationship between these two areas of functioning has not been systematically examined in youth presenting to residential treatment. This study examines the association between youth psychopathology and physical health problems in a sample of 606 youth entering a large residential treatment program between 2003 and 2010. As a part of the intake process, youth psychopathology symptoms were assessed using the parent-report form of the Child Behavior Checklist, and youth physical health problems were assessed in a medical evaluation by a licensed child health professional. Results indicated that higher levels of youth psychopathology, particularly internalizing problems, were associated with greater risk for physical health problems and more prescription medications. Psychopathology comorbidity was also associated with physical health problems. These findings suggest an interplay between physical and mental health among youth entering residential treatment, highlighting the need for integrated assessment and intervention services that address psychological and medical needs within this population. Copyright © 2013 Hammill Institute on Disabilities.


Rising health care costs have led to an emphasis on identifying factors that contribute to medical service utilization. Previous research has suggested an association between youth psychopathology and service utilization; however, prospective studies among high-risk populations are needed. The current study examined youth psychopathology as a predictor of subsequent medical service utilization among a large sample (N = 536) of youth entering residential treatment. Youth psychopathology and medical status were assessed at intake, and medical service utilization was tracked across the duration of the residential placement. Results indicated that higher levels of psychopathology predicted greater youth medical service utilization, even after controlling for the presence of a diagnosed medical condition. Internalizing problems was a significant independent predictor of utilization, but externalizing problems was not. These findings highlight the association between mental health and medical service utilization and suggest that effective behavioral health services may be helpful in reducing costly medical service needs. Copyright © 2013 Springer.


Adolescents entering residential care have high rates of clinical weight problems; however, some aspects of the residential setting may be conducive to healthy weight management. This study aimed to examine the change in adolescent weight status from intake to discharge among a large sample of youth in a residential care program (N = 1195). Although weight management was not a specific target of the program, adolescents were more likely to move to a healthier weight status than a less healthy one by the end of the placement. Adolescents who were obese at the time of intake (n = 274) showed an average decrease of .21 zBMI units, and approximately a quarter of this group moved to a healthier weight category at discharge. These changes compare favorably to outcomes for existing treatments for adolescent weight problems and may represent clinically-meaningful improvements in weight status for many youth. Further, a decrease in psychotropic medication prescriptions was significantly associated with weight loss for adolescents who were overweight at intake. The implications of these findings, including the possible benefits of effective weight management in residential settings and the potential value of highly structured environments in promoting healthy weight among vulnerable adolescents, are discussed. Copyright © 2013 Elsevier Ltd.

We investigated the relationship between gender and clinician diagnosis of a depressive disorder at intake on variables reflecting depression among adolescents in residential treatment. It was hypothesized that females diagnosed with a depressive disorder would have the highest scores on measures of suicide risk, the number of symptoms of a major depressive episode, suicidal behavior, and suicidal ideation. Results indicated partial support for the predicted comparisons. Females diagnosed with a depressive disorder scored significantly higher on measures of depressive symptom count and suicidal ideation. Surprisingly, females without a diagnosis of a depressive disorder had higher suicide risk scores than the remaining groups. The results of this study highlight the importance of assessment and treatment of internalizing disorders in youth entering residential programs, particularly female adolescents. Copyright © 2012 Springer.


There has been ongoing concern about the negative impact of residential treatment on youth in care. Research examining the impact of negative peer influence in juvenile justice, education, and residential care setting is reviewed. A study was conducted to examine the impact of negative peer contagion on the level of problem behavior in a residential care program, and the extent to which caregiver experience and youth time-in-program mediated that relationship. The study used archival data for 1,438 first-time admissions to a large Midwestern out-of-home residential program for youth with emotional and behavioral problems. Hierarchical Linear Modeling was used to examine the relationship between daily reports of conduct and oppositional defiant disorder (CD/ODD) behaviors and the percentage of conduct disorder youth living in a home. Greater exposure to conduct disordered peers was not related to increased rates of CD/ODD behavior. CD/ODD behavior was directly related to direct care staff level of experience and youth time in program. Implications for residential care are discussed. Copyright © 2012 Springer.


This study examined admission data for differences between two groups of youth in a staff-secured treatment setting: one came from a locked setting within the same integrated continuum and the other came from outside the continuum. Results showed that youth who entered the less restrictive program directly were more aggressive and on more medications than youth who stepped down from the more restrictive setting. Results also showed that while disruptive behavior improved for both groups, there was a smaller group of youth who did not improve during treatment and who were ultimately stepped up to a higher level of care. Copyright © 2012 Taylor & Francis Group, LLC


Although youth with disabilities represent nearly a third of the population served in residential care, little is known about the functioning of these children as compared to their peers without disabilities at program entry, departure, and six-month follow-up. This study sought to extend previous research by evaluating the behavioral, mental health, and educational characteristics of youth with (n = 159) and without disabilities (n = 344) served in a large residential treatment family group home program at three time points to determine group similarities and differences. Results revealed both groups presented significant risks and profiles that were more alike than different. However, across specific indicators of behavioral, mental health, and educational functioning, group differences were found. Specifically, youth with disabilities presented more formal placements and social problems at program entry, had more placement changes in care, and presented poorer peer and adult relationships and higher risk behaviors.
(e.g., arrests and probations) six-months post-departure. Implications, limitations, and future research are discussed. Copyright © 2011 SEBDA.


OBJECTIVE: To examine the prevalence of physical health problems among youth entering residential treatment. PATIENTS AND METHODS: The sample included 1744 youth (mean age: 14.6 ± 1.8 years) entering a large residential treatment program between 2000 and 2010. Youth received an intake medical evaluation, including a review of available records, detailed medical history, and physical examination. Medical conditions present at the time of the evaluation were recorded by the examining physician and later coded by the research team. Only diagnoses recognized by the International Classification of Diseases, 10th Revision, were included in the analyses. To maintain the focus on physical health problems, behavioral and emotional disorders listed in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fourth Edition, Text Revision were excluded. Obesity, acne, and allergies were also excluded. RESULTS: Approximately one-third (33.7%) of youth had a physical health diagnosis at the time of intake. Asthma was the most prevalent condition diagnosed (15.3% of the sample). Girls were significantly more likely to have a diagnosis than were boys (37.1% vs 31.5%). Age was not associated with diagnostic status. Rates of physical health conditions differed significantly by ethnicity: black (36.4%) and white (35.4%) youth had the highest rates, and Hispanic youth (23.2%) had the lowest. CONCLUSIONS: Youth who enter residential treatment have high rates of physical health conditions. These problems could complicate mental health treatment and should be considered in multidisciplinary treatment planning. Copyright © 2011 American Academy of Pediatrics.


Although much is known about the behavioral and educational characteristics of youth at entry to residential care, little is known about youth language performance. Given the impact of language deficits on outcomes this study assessed the specific language skills of 70 adolescents at entry to a residential treatment setting. Results revealed elevated levels of risk across Core Language and comprehensive language indexes. Areas of greatest concern were with receptive language skills with just over 75% of the sample indicating some level of impairment. Implications for treatment and practice, study limitations, and recommendations for future research are discussed. Copyright © 2011 Taylor & Francis Group, LLC


This study evaluated the characteristics related to a successful reintegration among youth from a residential facility. Specifically, this study describes the transition skills of youth at departure in five areas: (a) education and employment goals, (b) self-determination skills, (c) social support, (d) life skills, and (e) hopefulness. Further, self-report and teacher ratings of youths' self-determination and life skills were examined to determine possible differences in perception between youth and their school and Family Teachers (house-parents). One hundred four youth departing the Boys Town Treatment Family Home residential program participated in the study. The majority of youth reported average or above average skills in the five domains. However, significant differences were found between youth and schoolteacher reports of self-determination skills. The results indicate the need to provide transition services related to success post-discharge, including individualized transition plans and family involvement during treatment. Copyright © 2010 Springer.

At the time of entry into residential treatment, many youth have prescriptions for one or more psychotropic medications. It is not well understood why some youth are prescribed only one psychotropic medication while others may be prescribed more. We sought to determine if differences existed between youth entering residential treatment with monopharmacy (n = 77) versus youth entering with polypharmacy (n=103). Youth were compared across demographic, family, behavioral, mental health, and psychotropic medication variables. The only significant differences identified were related to the numbers of youth with prescriptions across the different psychotropic classes. As would be expected, youth experiencing polypharmacy were more likely to have prescriptions within each class. Implications, limitations, and recommendations for future research are discussed. Copyright © 2010 Springer.


Children in residential care are a heterogeneous population, presenting various combinations of risks. Existing studies on these children suggest high variability across multiple domains (e.g., academics, behavior). Given this heterogeneity, it is important to begin to identify the combinations and patterns of multiple risks, or risk profiles, these children present. The purpose of this study was to evaluate the academic and behavioral risk profiles of children entering residential care. Cluster analysis procedures using academic and behavior variables revealed three distinct profiles of children: Group 1: *Average Janes*, characterized by average academic skills, no behavior problems, and some demographic risks; Group 2: *Academic Risks*, characterized by low academics and increased rule-breaking behavior; and finally Group 3: *Behavioral Risks*, characterized by average academics and elevated behaviors. These preliminary finding are discussed along with limitations, directions for future research, and implications. Copyright © 2010 Springer.


The purpose of this study was to examine behavioral outcomes in an out of home placement depending on whether youth’s ethnicity was congruent with the ethnicity of the caregiver (family teacher). It was hypothesized that African American children in transracial out of home placements would exhibit significantly more internalizing and externalizing behavior problems compared to either Caucasian children in transracial out of home placements, or African American or Caucasian children placed with the same race caregivers. Results provide support for hypotheses related to some youth externalizing behaviors, while hypotheses regarding youth internalizing behaviors were not supported. We discuss the need to consider the ethnicity congruence between out of home placement caregivers and youth. Additionally, the results of this study reflect the need for caregiver training in multicultural competence. Copyright © 2010 Elsevier.


Residential programs for youth may improve youth behavior during placement, but it is not clear whether there is an association between a youth’s behavior pattern during placement and post-placement outcomes. Life course perspective has been used to understand longitudinal patterns and pathways, and new statistical methods have been developed to identify latent trajectory groups. This study used administrative data from a family-style group care program to assess whether a youth’s externalizing behavior trajectory while in placement can significantly predict delinquency and adjustment outcomes at discharge and 6-month follow-up. Findings from multinomial logistic regression revealed a statistically significant relationship between a youth’s behavior trajectory class and outcomes. Behavior pattern during
care was a stronger predictor of outcome than cross-sectional measures such as other demographic factors, placement history or mental-health need indicators. Copyright © 2010 John Wiley & Sons, Inc.


Research on the relationship between length of stay in out-of-home residential care and educational outcomes is scant and has yielded mixed results. This study investigates this issue by examining the relationship between length of stay in family-style residential care and education achievement. Participants belonged to one of two cohorts that were part of a larger follow-up study designed to measure functional post-departure outcomes. Cohort 1 had departed care 5 years earlier whereas cohort 2 had departed 16 years earlier. Findings for both cohorts reveal that longer lengths of stay are predictive of obtaining at least a high school education. Older admission age was also found to be a predictor in the 5 year cohort. Results do not support the notion that longer lengths of stay are counterproductive. On the contrary, these results suggest that longer lengths of stay in quality residential care may benefit not only the youth and their families, but society by reducing the societal cost (e.g., lost wages, crime) when an at-risk youth does not receive sufficient treatment. Copyright © 2010 Elsevier.


This article presents a psychotropic medication management approach that is used within a residential care program. The approach is used to assess medications at youths' times of entry and to facilitate decision making during care. Data from a typical case study have indicated that by making medication management decisions slowly, systematically, and based on behavioral data, it is possible to make changes to psychotropic treatment that have a positive effect on youth behavior and psychological well-being. Copyright © 2010 Child Welfare League of America.


Youth departing from out-of-home care settings face numerous challenges as they adapt to new settings or return to placements that have been unsuccessful in the past. Although several thousand youth face this transition annually, little is known about their specific needs and risks at departure. To better identify needs and risks, we evaluated the discharge data of 640 youth served in a residential group care setting by addressing the following questions: (a) to what settings do youth depart following a stay in residential group care, (b) what are the demographic, family, educational, behavioral, and departure characteristics of youth at departure, and (c) do these characteristics differ for youth departing to different levels of restrictiveness? Results indicate significant differences on youth characteristics based on levels of restrictiveness at departure placement. As one might expect, youth departing to more restrictive placements presented a broad host of challenges across domains, while those departing to less restrictive settings demonstrated fewer needs and departed with greater educational and behavioral gains. Results provide support for the development and planning of targeted aftercare programs designed to promote the short- and long-term functioning of youth served in out-of-home care. Copyright © 2010 Springer.


Research has shown that youth in residential treatment often enter care with significant academic deficits and struggle in classroom settings. Yet, little research exists on their academic progress over time. Given the significant negative effects of school failure for these youth, and the protective influence of academic success, research needs to systematically evaluate their academic functioning and identify interventions that may improve their educational outcomes. This study sought to address some of the limitations in the literature by examining the academic gains made by youth from intake to one-year follow-up at the Boys
Town Treatment Family Home Program, a large-scale residential treatment program in the Midwest. Copyright © 2010 American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children.


Youth entering residential care possess significant emotional and behavioral needs; yet, it is uncertain whether these needs have remained constant or are changing over time. This study examined mental health variables from the admission files of 1,047 youth entering residential group home care in 1995 and 2004. Sequential logistical regression analyses revealed that the mental health needs of youth admitted in 2004 were greater than those for youth in 1995 with regard to having multiple psychiatric diagnoses, being prescribed two or more psychotropic medications, and using alcohol or drugs. As such, these analyses should be replicated in other group homes as well as in other placement settings within the system of care. Copyright © 2009 SAGE.


Although much is known about the mental health and behavioral functioning of youth who enter residential care programs, very little research has focused on examining the family characteristics of this population. Knowledge about family characteristics is important, however, as it can aid in tailoring programs to meet the needs of families who are involved in treatment and help them address concerns in order to facilitate the transition home. Therefore, the purpose of the present study was to examine the characteristics of youth’s families at the time of entry into a residential care program. Using data from archived youth files, family characteristics were examined across several areas, including: (a) youth variables related to family (e.g., out-of-home placements, legal guardian), (b) family risk (e.g., substance abuse, domestic violence, financial problems), and (c) parenting (e.g., adequate supervision, discipline, communication). Findings suggested that youth entering residential care programs have families with high levels of risk and low levels of parenting skills. Implications and considerations for future research are discussed. Copyright © 2009 Routledge.


Although females represent almost half of all youth involved in residential care in the U.S., very little is known about this population. In order to examine differences in characteristics of male (n = 308) and female (n = 180) youth departing from residential care, data were collected on 488 youth from a large residential treatment facility in the Midwest. Gender differences were assessed on 16 variables measured at the time of departure across family, education, behavior, and departure domains. Overall, male and female youth departing from residential care were very similar for measures collected at the time of departure. Only three variables (GPA at departure, number of school referrals during the previous eight weeks, and planned departure) were found to be significantly different between males and females. Implications for future research and the provision of aftercare services are discussed. Copyright © 2009 Springer.


We examined the potential impact of negative peer influence within a treatment-focused residential care setting. Subjects were 712 youth consecutively admitted to a large residential treatment program (9–19 years of age). Based on Diagnostic Interview Schedule for Children (DISC) scores, 247 (35%) of these

Although concerns about peer contagion are often cited in critiques of group treatments for troubled youths, few studies have examined the effects of exposure to deviant peers in residential group care settings. This study used administrative data of youth served at Boys Town, a nationally-known group care provider. Using latent class growth analysis, this study identified the externalizing behavior trajectories of youth in group care as well as the behavior trajectory of the peers with whom they lived, assessed the relationship between youth trajectory classes and individual and peer group characteristics as well as the relationship between an individual youth's behavior pattern and the behavior pattern of proximal peers. Several results suggested the presence of peer contagion on group care: a trajectory class of gradually increasing externalizing behavior problems, the strength of deviant peer density in predicting an individual youth's externalizing behavior trajectories and significant associations between behavior patterns of youth and proximal peers. While there is some evidence that suggests an increase in problem behavior during care, results from this study indicated that over 90% of the youth did not have an increase in problem behaviors and that positive peer influences may also be protective and inhibit problem behaviors. Copyright © 2009 Springer.


Peer rejection is a common experience for youth with emotional and behavioral disabilities and it is associated with increased risk of negative short- and long-term outcomes. There is a high premium on interventions that can improve the social status and functioning of these youth. Positive Peer Reporting (PPR) is a behavior analytic intervention designed to increase the social status of peer-rejected youth. Although several studies have demonstrated the efficacy of PPR, it is unclear whether the positive effects generalize to other settings and/or maintain after the intervention is withdrawn. This study provides preliminary support for the generalization and maintenance of PPR effects in a residential treatment program and highlights factors that may mitigate the effectiveness of PPR. Copyright © 2008 Behavior Analyst Online.


Little is known about the characteristics or functioning of children with ADHD in residential care as compared to their non-ADHD peers. This study evaluated data on 538 children with (n =125) and without (n = 413) ADHD in residential care to determine demographic, mental health, behavioral, and treatment (i.e., medication use) characteristics. Results revealed that both groups presented elevated risks, however, scores for children with ADHD indicated even greater levels of need. Specifically, differences were found between the two groups on demographics (e.g., family reunification status, restrictiveness of prior out-of-home placements), behavior (e.g., attention problems, rule-breaking, and aggressive behaviors) and medication status. Findings suggest there is a need for aftercare services to help support families as children transition from care, interventions to address behavior, and medication management through assessment and monitoring. Copyright © 2008 Springer Science+Business Media.

Although there have been a few recent studies examining psychotropic medication utilization for youth in residential care, the majority of these studies have involved acute inpatient facilities. While critical to the understanding of psychotropic utilization for youth in out-of-home placement, a large percentage of youth placed in residential care reside in non-acute facilities. The high psychotropic medication utilization rates in acute hospitalizations may not be indicative of psychotropic medication utilization patterns for youth in group-home residential facilities. This study examined psychotropic medication utilization over the course of treatment for adolescents admitted to a large residential group home for youth with emotional and behavioral disorders. Copyright © 2008 The de la Parte Institute.


This study examined the impact of therapeutic alliance (TA) on therapy outcomes for youth with behavioral and emotional problems residing in residential care. Study participants were 71 youth in an out-of-home family-style residential treatment facility who were referred to an onsite psychotherapy clinic. A therapeutic alliance scale was completed independently after each session by the youth and their therapist. Two outcome measures were used: a symptom scale that was completed by the youth before each therapy session, and a daily observational measure made by direct care staff of all significant events for each youth. Youth symptoms improved significantly over the course of therapy and their behaviors decreased to a rate similar to their peers. TA ratings, however, were only marginally related to therapy outcomes. Implications for assessing therapeutic alliance in child therapy are discussed. Copyright © 2008 Routledge.


Objective. The purpose of this study was to examine psychotropic medication utilization over the course of treatment for children and adolescents admitted to a large residential group-home facility for youth with emotional and behavioral disorders. Method. Retrospective analyses of psychotropic medication utilization at admission, during treatment, and at departure were examined for 1,010 children and adolescents consecutively admitted to the facility during 2001–2004. The relationship between psychotropic medication utilization and demographic variables, psychiatric diagnoses, objective measures of behavioral and emotional problems, in-program behavior, and ratings of program success were examined. Results. The overall utilization rate was 49%, and there was a significant reduction in utilization from admission (40%) to departure (26%). Reductions were evident across all medication classes (e.g., stimulants, antipsychotics, etc.). At admission, medication utilization was related to several psychosocial variables, higher scores on measures of behavioral and emotional problems, and psychiatric diagnoses (attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and mood disorders). A small percentage (16%) of youth was prescribed novel medication during stay. Being placed on medication during treatment was related to internalizing problems on the Child Behavior Checklist (CBCL) at admission, psychiatric diagnoses, higher rates of in-program behavior problems, and poorer outcomes at departure. Youth departing on medication were more likely to be male, younger, and rated as doing more poorly in the program. They also were more likely to be placed in more restrictive settings at follow-up. Conclusions. There was a high rate of psychotropic medication utilization among this population, though utilization rates dropped significantly over the course of treatment. Copyright © 2008 Mary Ann Liebert, Inc.

The objective of this study was to demonstrate the utility of time-to-event analysis as a means of developing a feedback loop from researchers to program staff for the purpose of quality improvement and program evaluation. Data collected in a Five-Year Follow-Up Study of 188 youth discharged from Boys Town residential care programs across the United States were treated with Cox Proportional Hazards Regression Analysis with time-to-criminal behavior as the criterion variable. The most explanatory and parsimonious model included history of criminal behavior at the time of intake and score on the Departure Success Scale at the time of discharge. The results suggest that increasing attention be focused on addressing developing criminal tendencies and intensive aftercare for youth with a high risk of offending. Review of cases of youth expected to offend but who did not offend indicate that those high-risk youth had formed and maintained healthy bonds with their caretakers during and after treatment. Copyright © 2008 Joseph D. Cautilli.


Often considered a “last resort placement,” residential settings serve a broad range of children who present significant risks. While much is known about emotional and behavioral functioning, less is known about academic strengths and limitations. This study evaluated 127 children at intake into a residential care program to determine demographic, behavioral, mental health, and educational characteristics. Results indicated that children entering care present high levels of risk across domains. Primary risks were found on indicators of behavior (e.g., rule breaking, aggression), mental illness (e.g., disruptive behavior, anxiety), and academic performance (e.g., general knowledge, reading). Implications, limitations, and recommendations for future research are discussed. Copyright © 2008 Routledge.


Objective: The number of youth in residential care programs who have been abused is high. The relationship between childhood abuse victimization and adult intimate partner violence (IPV) is well documented. This study compared the rates of IPV 16 years after individuals had participated in a long-term residential care program with individuals accepted to the program who did not participate. The IPV rates for these two groups were also compared to national normative data. Method: Information on adult functional outcomes was obtained from former residential care and comparison youth via a confidential survey that was administered either by telephone or by mail. Analysis was limited to respondents who were currently married or involved in a marriage-like relationship (n = 131; 92% male). Results: The IPV rates for the sample were 9.3% for those who stayed in the residential program less than 18 months and 6.5% for those who stayed more than 18 months, neither of which were significantly different from the national norm of 8.4%. The IPV rate for the comparison group was 26.1%, which was significantly higher than the national norm. Regardless of length of program stay, respondents who were maltreated in childhood had a 14.5% IPV rate, which was significantly lower than the estimated 36–42% rate projected for individuals with similar backgrounds. Conclusion: We conclude that time spent in a treatment-oriented residential care program was associated with lower adult IPV rates. Specifically, the skills taught in a long-term, treatment-based residential program (e.g., healthy interpersonal relationships, self-government) may have a long-term beneficial impact for adolescents at high risk of adult IPV. Copyright © 2007 Elsevier.

This article describes the process that youth in a large residential out-of-home care program complete as they prepare for the transition into adulthood. This process is geared toward preparing these young people through a series of structured real-life activities and lessons. Results from a separate 5-year follow-up study indicate that those who completed this process report more positive functional outcomes than those who did not. Also addressed is the importance of effective after-care services to help these young adults maintain the gains established during treatment. Copyright © 2007 The Haworth Press.


Gender differences for adolescents in residential care were examined for a sample of 2,067 youth in a large residential facility. At admission, female youth were more troubled than male youth, as shown in significantly higher Diagnostic Interview Schedule for Children (DISC) diagnoses and comorbidity rates, higher internalizing and externalizing Child Behavior Checklist scores, and significantly higher Suicide Prevention Scale hopelessness, negative self-evaluation, and suicide-ideation scores. Girls had higher rates of depressive and anxiety diagnoses on the DISC at both admission and one year. Both genders demonstrated significant reductions in both externalizing and internalizing problem behaviors over the first year in the program. Girls had significantly higher rates of internalizing problem behavior but showed a significantly greater reduction in these behaviors than did boys. At departure, girls were rated as being more successful than boys by clinical staff. Youth did not differ by gender in their behavior on a 6-month follow-up success scale. Implications for prioritizing research addressing the needs of female adolescents in residential care are discussed. Copyright © 2006 American Psychological Association.


This study investigated changes in hope among 155 youth (ages 10 to 17 years) placed in a residential treatment facility over a six-month period. The child and adolescent participants met criteria for a range of emotional and behavioral disorders and received interventions hypothesized to improve hopeful thinking. Hope scores significantly improved over six months of treatment. The positive changes in hope were not moderated by ethnicity or sex. For agency hope scores (i.e., willpower), those with higher levels of psychopathology at admission demonstrated significantly more improvement in agency thinking over the course of six months. Copyright © 2006 American Psychological Association.


Social attention in the form of acknowledgment from one’s peers can be a powerful positive reinforcer, particularly for students who are rejected or neglected by their peers. Unfortunately, peers may be more likely to attend to and reinforce antisocial behaviors of their peers than to attend to and acknowledge prosocial behaviors. Positive peer reporting is a strategy designed to address this issue by increasing the availability of peer acknowledgment for the display of appropriate behavior and social interactions for a target individual or group of students. Copyright © 2005 SAGE Publications, Inc.

Therapy is often effective in ameliorating emotional and behavioral problems of children and adolescents. Therapeutic alliance (TA), or the quality of the relationship and collaboration between therapist and client, has been proposed as an important mechanism for client improvement. This study presents outcomes from the first year of an ongoing project at Father Flanagan's Boys' Home to evaluate the impact of TA on therapy outcomes for youth in residential care. Copyright © 2005 The de la Parte Institute.


The accumulated knowledge on the development of children in residential settings covers a lot of ground but leaves a great deal unturned. The article summarizes what is known about child development in the context of residential settings and concludes that there is little evidence to draw on to make clear recommendations about what types of children are likely to benefit from what types of residential settings. It maintains that, in the absence of evidence, policy and practice regarding residential care often has been guided by ideology. Residence has become a place of last resort for young people who cannot receive the support and/or safety they need from their own families or from foster families, or who pose a danger to others. The article calls for more rigorous evaluations of the impact of residence on child outcomes as well as concerted efforts to apply research evidence to policy and practice. Copyright © 2005 Blackwell Publishing.


The purpose of this study was to measure adult outcomes for youth served in a long-term residential care and education program. The results do indicate significant positive adult outcomes for these youth in several important areas, including high school graduation and reduced intimate partner violence, but concerns remain in the areas of post-secondary education and illicit drug use. Current findings also continue to support the hypothesis that a longer length of stay in residential care is associated with better long-term outcomes. Copyright © 2005 The de la Parte Institute.


Out-of-home treatment for youth with conduct problems is increasing rapidly in this country. Most programs for these youth deliver treatment in a group format and commonly employ some version of a token economy. Despite widespread evidence of effectiveness, a substantial minority of treated youth fail to respond. Participants for this study were three youth who were nonresponsive to treatment provided in a family-style residential care program with a comprehensive token economy. Our approach to the "nonresponse" of these youth involved modifications of the frequency and immediacy of their access to the backup rewards earned with tokens. We evaluated the effects of the modifications with a treatment-withdrawal experimental design. Dependent measures included two indices of youth response to treatment: intense behavioral episodes and backup rewards earned. Results showed substantial improvement among these indices during treatment conditions. Copyright © 2004 SAGE Publications, Inc.

This case study describes the use of functional assessment in combination with experimental functional analysis as methods for informing and evaluating individualized treatment in a large residential treatment setting for adolescents. The case of John, a normally developed 12-year-old male, illustrates how functional information can be used to derive a simple treatment that can be effective in modifying previously intractable and highly disruptive behavior. Challenges associated with maintenance of treatment over time are described in relation to John’s follow-up status. Finally, recommendations are made about the utility of functional methodologies within residential care settings and the need for ongoing experimental evaluation testing limits of such methodologies. Copyright © 2004 SAGE Publications, Inc.


Simplified regulated breathing (SRB) has been demonstrated to reduce or eliminate stuttering in children. However, much of the current research has evaluated the intervention with school-aged children within educational contexts. In the current case report, we extended the application of SRB by evaluating its effectiveness in treating stuttering displayed by a 15-year-old resident of a large midwestern residential facility. Further, we evaluated the impact across different assessment conditions. Results showed that SRB resulted in decreased stuttering for the participant, although differential effectiveness across conditions was noted. These results are discussed in terms of the generality of SRB across client populations and clinical settings, as well as the value of addressing contextual variables when treating stuttering. Copyright © 2004 SAGE Publications, Inc.


Little research has been published on tattling, even less on its social impact, and we found none directly investigating tattling by adolescents. This study assessed the extent to which tattling, as perceived by peers and caregivers of adolescents in a residential care program, was associated with various dimensions of social status and other behavioral correlates. Eighty-eight adolescent participants rated their housemates on likeability, perceived rates of tattling, and other behavioral descriptors. In addition, caretakers also rated each youth in terms of perceived tattling. On the basis of likeability ratings, participants were classified into one of five categories: popular, average, controversial, neglected, and rejected. Results showed a significant negative correlation between likeability and perceived tattling rates. In addition, youth classified as socially rejected were more likely to be perceived by both their peers and care providers as engaging in high rates of tattling. Copyright © 2004 SAGE Publications, Inc.


This article describes a long-term follow-up study of 250 youth who applied for admission to Boys Town between 1981 and 1985. On average, the follow-up occurred 16 years after departure for those youth who came to Boys Town. The current survey consisted of 151 items that measured the productivity, social functioning, and quality of life for these individuals. The results for former youth were compared with information for the U.S. population at large. The results of the survey support the conclusion that quality residential care and education can help at-risk youth become productive citizens. Findings support the hypothesis that a longer length of stay is associated with better long-term outcomes in the areas of high school graduation, employment, domestic abuse, and criminality. Copyright © 2004 National Juvenile Court Services Association.

The Teaching Family Program is one of the most extensively researched models for residential care. A major meta-analysis found that the Teaching Family Model (TFM) was one of the five most consistently effective treatments for delinquents. However, two recent publications imply that behaviorally based and/or group treatments might be harmful, and TFM has not been evaluated as much for girls as for boys. This study responds to these challenges by summarizing outcomes of the Girls and Boys Town Family Home Program, a modification of the Teaching Family Model. Both boys and girls improved significantly on 16 of 17 standardized outcome scores and were functioning as well as national norms three months after discharge. This expands evidence of the Family Home Program’s effectiveness to a wide range of outcomes for girls, as well as boys. Copyright © 2004 West Virginia University Press.


In this investigation we examined the social relationships formed by children who were identified as rejected. A total of 105 students attending a middle school (fourth through eighth grade) within a large community-style residential treatment facility participated in this study. Data were collected on the students' social networks and sociometric status. Results indicated that a majority of rejected children affiliated within a peer cluster and were well integrated within the broader social network. Students who affiliated in peer clusters with a rejected student tended to be similar in sociometric status. Implications of these findings are discussed in relation to the peer rejection and the social affiliation research literatures. Copyright © 2003 SAGE Publications, Inc.


In this article I expound several conceptual and pragmatic aspects of the least restrictive alternative (LRA) as alluded to by Fields and Ogles (2002). Specifically, the study and implementation of the LRA might be better served by attention to and appreciation of the variability and differential effectiveness of programs within as well as across programs with similar selling characteristics; a more thorough understanding of attitudes of parents, youth, and referral sources regarding placement and treatment; and an appreciation of the difference between effective treatment and least restrictive environment. Copyright © 2002 Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.


Various authors have argued for the inclusion of well-being measures in order to assess children’s quality of life in residential settings. In the present study, twenty-two children admitted to a residential treatment program were administered a multidimensional life satisfaction scale. The children were re-administered the instrument again approximately four months later. Results revealed that the present sample reported positive satisfaction ratings across all life satisfaction domains. Further, significant positive increases on their Global, Friends, Self, and Total satisfaction scores were noted upon re-administration. Implications of the findings, as well as suggestions for future research, are discussed. Copyright © 2001 The Haworth Press, Inc.


There has recently been a growing emphasis on empirical outcomes for behavioral health programs for children and adolescents. As these outcome systems are developed, they raise important questions about
how fairly they will be used to evaluate programs and personnel. Measures of severity or prognosis of clients are also necessary to make risk adjustments for outcome measures in behavioral health. This study considers a wide range of admission information for a prognosis index to make adjustments to outcome measures. The authors selected items for the prognosis index according to their ability to predict success at discharge. Copyright © 2001 The de la Parte Institute.


We studied how rewarding youth in residential care for publicly reporting positive social behavior influenced the social interactions and acceptance of their most socially isolated peers. Results showed that the intervention resulted in substantial improvements in social interactions by the previously isolated peers. Peer acceptance ratings also improved for 2 of the target youths. Copyright © 2000 PubMed Central.


This chapter reviews all of the residential research conducted at Father Flanagan’s Boys’ Home during the previous six years. The chapter is divided into three primary sections. The first section describes a variety of data that provide empirically derived profiles of youth in care. The second section describes a variety of experimentally derived outcomes of care. The third section provides a synthesis of all the findings, a behavioral interpretation, and a concluding statement. Copyright © 2000 Context Press.


Group intervention for antisocial youth has received harsh criticism in recent years. This paper reviews relevant research focused on the influence of contact with delinquent peers on the development of antisocial activity. Also reviewed are studies reporting outcomes of group intervention for antisocial youth. Although a few studies have found iatrogenic effects for group intervention with antisocial youth, the majority have not. Well-developed models of group intervention have produced substantial reductions in youth antisocial activity. We describe one such program, a family-style residential program based on behavioral learning principles, and review outcomes of this program. We conclude that treatment of antisocial youth in groups is feasible and can be effective in reducing delinquent behavior. Copyright © 2001 Human Sciences Press, Inc.


We evaluated the influence of a positive peer-reporting procedure on positive and negative peer interactions, peer acceptance ratings, and the daily problem behaviors of a 15-year-old boy in residential care. Results suggested the procedure was effective in all three domains. The use of data to guide implementation of the procedure is discussed in terms of a Level 2, semi-scientific evaluation of procedures according to the categories of research described by Hawkins and Matthews (1999). Copyright © 1999 West Virginia University Press.


This booklet outlines the benefits supported by research of behaviorally oriented, family-style residential care programs for youth. Included is a description of research that profiles the youth in care and details program outcomes, such as Child Behavior Checklist, Diagnostic Interview Schedule for Children, quality
of life, educational, and other measures. It concludes with a behavioral conceptualization and an extensive list of references. Copyright © 1999 Boys Town Press.


This study compared scores on the Child Behavior Checklist (CBCL) and Youth Self-Report (YSR) for samples of youth in three out-of-home placements with varying levels of restrictiveness. Mean CBCL T scores were more than a standard deviation higher than mean YSR T scores on the Broadband scales and about 2/3 of a standard deviation higher on the Syndrome scales. The magnitude of the discrepancy varied between placements for several scales, with the least restrictive placements having the largest difference between CBCL and YSR ratings for the Externalizing scale. For the Internalizing scale, the discrepancy was larger for older youth (ages 15-18) than for younger youth (ages 11-14). These results support previous findings that in clinical samples, adults rate children’s behavioral and emotional problems as more severe than do children themselves. This study extends prior research by demonstrating the occurrence of this discrepancy across a continuum of care. Copyright © 1999 American Psychological Association.


This paper summarizes some lessons learned from our experiences with follow-up evaluations at Boys Town. We implemented an extensive series of follow-up interviews for our group home residential program from 1981 through 1992. Then we changed to a simpler uniform follow-up evaluation plan from 1992 through 1996. Currently we are doing briefer, more focused follow-up procedures. After describing these three efforts, the conclusion summarizes the major lessons learned. Although such evaluations are difficult to implement successfully, follow-up information is crucial for simultaneously enhancing both the long-term welfare of children and the cost effectiveness of treatment. Copyright © 1999 American Association of Children’s Residential Centers.


This study investigated whether specific academic deficits were associated with attention-deficit disorder (ADD) subtypes. Twenty students (ages 8-12) with attention-deficit disorder with hyperactivity (ADD/H) were compared to 20 students with attention-deficit disorder without hyperactivity (ADD/noH). Group differences were compared using a MANCOVA, and paired t tests were used to compare within-group differences. Dependent variables for the within-group differences were four achievement subtest scores from the Woodcock-Johnson Psycho-Educational Battery-Revised: Letter-Word Identification, Passage Comprehension, Calculation, and Applied Problems. Consistent with much of the previous research, no significant between-group differences were found on the achievement measures. Significant differences did, however, appear in the six within-group comparisons, all involving lower performance on the Math Calculations subtest. For students with ADD/H, only one comparison (with Math Applied Problems) reached significance. Students with ADD/noH, however, had significantly lower scores on the Calculation subtest compared to all of the other achievement subtests. These results provided additional support for the hypothesis that inattention exerts a specific and deleterious effect on the acquisition of arithmetic computation skills. These findings have important implications for the diagnosis and treatment of ADHD as conceptualized in the fourth edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-IV; American Psychiatric Association, 1994), because they suggest that students with ADHD-Predominantly Inattentive Type may be at increased risk for arithmetic calculation deficits. Copyright © 1999 PRO-ED Inc.

The present investigation evaluated the utility of classroom-based functional and adjunctive assessment of problem behaviors for two adolescents who met diagnostic criteria for attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and comorbid oppositional defiant disorder (ODD). For children with ADHD-ODD, environmental classroom variables, when systematically manipulated by teachers, were related to the occurrence and nonoccurrence of problem behaviors. Classroom interventions derived from information that was obtained during functional and adjunctive assessments from subsequent analyses resulted in substantial reductions in problem behaviors. Teacher and student consumer satisfactions ratings indicated that the interventions were effective and feasible in the classroom setting. Copyright © 1998 The Society for the Experimental Analysis of Behavior, Inc.


This study investigates the behavioral and emotional problems of children with learning disabilities (LD), serious emotional disturbance (SED), and LD/SED, using the Teacher Report Form (TRF) and Child Behavior Checklist (CBCL). The sample consisted of 217 students with LD, 72 students with SED, and 68 with SED/LD, ages 6 to 18 (mean age = 11.5). The students with SED were rated more impaired than the students with LD on all TRF scales, except Attention Problems, and on three of the eight CBCL syndrome scales. The children with LD differed from those with SED mainly in terms of severity of problems, not with respect to type of problem. It is concluded that students with co-morbid LD and SED are under-identified and underserved in special education systems. Copyright © 1998 PRO-ED Inc.


Some type of suicidal communication precedes 80% of attempted and completed suicides in adolescents. This study investigates the relationship between the number of suicidal communications prior to an attempt and the lethality of the attempt in a sample of adolescent youth residing in a residential treatment facility. The sample consisted of 46 youth who had a suicide attempt while in a large group home residential facility over a 9-year period. Results indicated that attempters who made fewer suicidal communications beforehand tended to use more lethal methods in their attempts. Attempters with two or more preceding suicidal communications had significantly lower lethality in their attempts than did those with fewer suicidal communications. Few differences emerged between the groups in regards to demographic or psychosocial variables. Copyright © 1998 The Association for Professionals in Services for Adolescents.


Placement in residential programs is a widely used, rapidly growing method of treating children and adolescents with severe conduct problems and antisocial behavior. This chapter argues for increased research in residential care. Two lines of research are reviewed as exemplary, and data from studies in those lines provide the basis for conceptualizing future approaches. Copyright © 1997 John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

An intervention for disruptive boys in residential care involving increases in positive to negative interactional ratios is described. The target of the intervention was daily problem behavior. Results from pooled time series analysis of the data revealed a significant decrease in behavior problems (one problem per boy per day) during the intervention for the boys as a group. Results from comparisons of mean behavior problems during baseline and intervention revealed decrease for five of the six boys. Results from a multiple baseline across boys revealed experimental control for three of the six. The results are discussed in terms of response contingent reinforcement and systemic behavior analysis. The benefits of combined group and single subject data analyses are also discussed. Copyright © 1997 SAGE Publications, Inc.


Although a relationship between attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and academic underachievement has been widely reported, the nature of this relationship has not been specified. The present investigation addresses this relationship directly by comparing 24 students (20 males and 4 females) with ADHD and 20 students (15 males and 5 females) with attention attention-deficit disorder without hyperactivity (ADD/noH) referred to a university-based diagnostic clinic for comprehensive neuropsychology assessment. The students ranged in age from 6 years 0 months to 12 years 10 months. Consistent with previous reports, this study found that math achievement test scores for students with ADD/noH were significantly lower than those for students with ADHD. These findings support previous research suggesting the ADD/noH may represent a distinct ADD subtype. It is hypothesized that inattention interferes with students’ ability to master abstract symbol systems, especially in the acquisition of basic arithmetic skills in the primary grades. Copyright © 1997 PRO-ED Inc.


For several decades, residential care has been under attack for philosophical, economical, and practical reasons. The family preservation movement and managed care have further fueled cost concerns about residential care. Research on residential care is relatively weak, and few studies are longitudinal or employ comparison groups. Daly shares findings from a long-term follow-up study of Boys Town residents that was begun in the 1980s that counter some prevalent biases. Copyright © 1996 The Alliance for Children and Families.


We studied how rewarding peers for publicly reporting positive aspects of a socially rejected girls’ behavior affected her social interactions and acceptance. The results indicated that positive peer reports reduced negative social interactions (to near zero) and increased positive interactions (to above 70%). In addition, social acceptance ratings of the girl increased from pre- to post-intervention. Copyright © 1996 The Society for the Experimental Analysis of Behavior, Inc.


This paper briefly reviews recent research in behaviorally oriented residential care, argues against the placement of youth in orphanages, and makes a case for continued research into residential care as an option. Copyright © 1996 John Wiley & Sons.

There is extensive literature on disruptive behavior and anxiety disorders and a growing literature on comorbidity. But there is little literature on comorbidity between disruptive behavior and anxiety, and we found none that specifically discusses social phobia. Because internalizing problems are more difficult to detect than externalizing problems, the latter may obscure the former when they occur together, especially with subtle internalizing problems such as social phobia. We present a case involving comorbidity between disruptive behavior and social phobia in a 14-year-old boy in residential care. Treatment for social phobia, involving modified public interactions, social-skills training, exposure and reinforcement-based feedback, reduced a high rate of disruptive behavior to near zero. Copyright © 1996 SAGE Publications, Inc.


To investigate the validity of five prevalent negative beliefs about residential placement, we followed adolescents from a residential program and a comparison group at 3-month intervals for 4 to 8 years. This residential program in the Midwest uses the Teaching-Family Model in which six to eight adolescents live in a family-style environment. The interviews included five scales reflecting youths' views about important aspects of their lives in placement: (1) Delivery of Helpful Treatment, (2) Satisfaction with Supervising Adults, (3) Isolation from Family, (4) Isolation from Friends, and (5) Sense of Personal Control. Hierarchical Linear Modeling allowed us to estimate group differences while controlling for developmental trends, demographic factors, and prior differences between groups. The two groups were equivalent on all scales before the study. During the following placement, however, the treatment group's ratings were significantly more positive than the comparison group on four of the five scales and approached significance on the fifth. These findings suggest that negative beliefs about life in residential placement for adolescents may not apply to all programs. Copyright © 1996 Springer Publishing Corporation.


We evaluated a program to protect the placements of 23 highly troublesome youth in voluntary residential care by reducing youth-to-staff ratios. Specifically, the youth were moved from regular program homes (with eight youth) to reduced ratio homes (with only four youth) instead of being terminated from the program. We provide evidence supporting the assertion that youth in the study sample were highly troublesome and at high risk for program failure and more restrictive placements. Placement in the reduced ratio homes protected the troubled youths' placement, resulting in an additional mean length of stay of 950 days without an increase in program restrictiveness. Further, the reduced-ratio homes increased the chances of success in the program for the study sample to a level equivalent to that for the much less troubled comparison sample. Cost estimates are also provided. Copyright © 1996 Human Sciences Press, Inc.


A functional analysis of entomophobia in a 14-year-old boy in residential care will be presented. The dependent measure involved performance of math calculations in a school-like setting under three conditions: no bugs, saying bugs were present (when they were not), and presence of bugs (live crickets). The results showed high-level performance in the “no bugs” condition, initially low and subsequently high performance in the “say bugs” condition, and consistently low performance in the “bugs present” condition. These findings subsequently informed an effective treatment which we briefly describe.

School performance and attitudes of a group of children placed in residential care were assessed during placement and for an average of four years after discharge. A comparison group of children who were not placed in the program was also followed. The residential program emphasized both behavioral and educational treatment. Group differences were tested using Hierarchical Linear Modeling (HLM). Results indicated that the treatment group had significantly greater improvements in both school performance and attitudes during placement. These differences were also maintained after discharge. It is suggested that long-term educational effects with troubled children may require an intensive intervention over an extended period of time. Copyright © 1996 Elsevier Science Ltd.


We report the effects of using an urine alarm, typically employed for nocturnal enuresis, to treat chronic diurnal enuresis in a 15-year-old female resident at Boys Town. The results of an ABAB reversal design indicate that the alarm eliminated wetting in both treatment phases and that continence was maintained at 3- and 6-month follow-up. Copyright © 1995 The Society for the Experimental Analysis of Behavior, Inc.


For those who work with young people, aggressive and conduct-disordered children are the most difficult of all to treat. This article discusses the relatively new concepts about how to treat such behavior, effective treatment methods, and how residential care programs can adopt strategies with aggressive youth. Copyright © 1994 The Alliance for Children and Families.


Outcome evaluations are a new undertaking for most residential child-care programs. Citing the significant impact such evaluations will have on improving services, Daly defines the concept and examines how they can best be developed and implemented. Copyright © 1994 The Alliance for Children and Families.


Studies provide conflicting evidence about whether psychotherapy helps children who are in out-of-home placements. It does appear, however, that psychotherapy can be quite effective under the right set of circumstances. Strategies for creating these circumstances are presented and discussed. Copyright © 1993 The Alliance for Children and Families.


Research and clinical practice suggest that organizations that provide out-of-home treatment for children can prevent most suicide attempts by organizing their efforts around eight principles. Each principle is discussed in this article and ideas for implementation are presented. Copyright © 1993 The Alliance for Children and Families.


Research is a valuable resource for the leaders of child-care organizations. It can help guide decisions about program design and help organizations plan program evaluation, program design, and program
funding priorities. This article outlines crucial areas in which research can supply information needed for such decisions. Copyright © 1993 The Alliance for Children and Families.


Irrespective of their backgrounds or their handicapping conditions, children need social skills to succeed in school, with peers, and eventually in their employment. This article stresses the importance of providing social skill development for children in residential treatment programs and outlines how agency leaders can determine whether they are providing adequate instruction in this area. Copyright © 1993 The Alliance for Children and Families.


The history of out-of-home care for children is replete with documented examples of abusive and neglectful practices. Certain elements, however, can foster effective and harm-free out-of-home care. A number of those elements are outlined in this paper, including caregiver support, a model of care, a focus on positive behavior, consumer orientation, training, and program evaluation. Copyright © 1992 Child Welfare League of America.


Boys Town began a longitudinal follow-up study of its residents in 1981. The design includes a non-residential comparison group. Participants were studied across a variety of self-reported measures, such as school performance, delinquency, victimization, perceptions of adults, drug/alcohol use, and psychological adjustment to their living situation. Previous analyses of the results indicated “during” treatment effects across a wide variety of measures – including school performance, delinquency, perception of adults, and victimization. Here we report the analyses of long-term results (2+ years after departure from Boys Town). There were no long-term differences attributable to program effects on placements, self-reported delinquent/criminal activity, victimization, drug/alcohol use, or measured psychological indices. There were long-term effects for school graduation/GED and grade level attained. These results have important implications for long-term treatment planning for “at risk” youth. These and other data question the durability of treatment effects for “at-risk youth” and support the need for continued treatment. Copyright © 1992 The de la Parte Institute.
Boys Town Foster Family Services® is a community-based program where professionally trained Foster Parents provide care and support to children of all ages, infancy through adolescents. Foster parents help meet the behavioral, emotional and educational needs of the children in their care. Service intensity ranges from highly intensive to less intensive, based upon the needs of the child. With a focus on reunification, Foster Family Services utilize a strength-based, team approach to work with families to achieve safety, permanency and well-being. Foster Parents receive 24/7 support from Boys Town professionals. When they leave, these children return home or, when that is not possible, are adopted or placed in another more permanent home.


A post-discharge outcomes interview for alumni of foster care was designed by four peer foster care agencies. Across all four agencies, 222 alumni were interviewed six months after being discharged from foster care services. Outcome domains, based on common measurement practices in child welfare and on social validation studies, include type of living environment (e.g., restrictiveness), placement stability, homelessness, school performance, employment, self-sufficiency, aggression, criminal behavior, substance use, relationships, community involvement, protection from harm, satisfaction, and impact of services. Results of the outcomes were compared to nationally sampled studies of children not in care. Generally, alumni reported positive outcomes across the various domains. The type of foster care, length of care, and age of alumni influenced the results. Implications for expanding this study to establish national benchmarks for outcomes, service use, and cost in foster care conclude the article. Copyright © 2003 Haworth Press, Inc.


This report discusses admission, outcome, and three-month follow-up information for children served in Boys Town’s ten Treatment Foster Family Services programs nationwide. Despite troubling histories and considerable behavioral difficulties, almost two-thirds of children served are discharged to less-restrictive settings after a little more than one year of treatment. Children continue to live in less-restrictive settings three months following discharge, and caregivers report improvements in school, with adults, peers, and biological families, and in the overall quality of life of the child. Copyright © 1995 Teaching Family Association.


Pooled time series is an underused analytic technique with the potential to increase researchers' ability to exploit clinical data. This article demonstrates the value of pooled time series by analyzing the behavior of youth in a specialized foster care treatment setting in response to naturally occurring clinical event changes in the number of youth living together in a treatment foster care setting. Pooled time series moves beyond typical clinical analyses with an increased capability of controlling statistically for complex within-subject effects and with a clinically useful measure of effect size. The complexity of the intrasubject data made it virtually impossible to determine the relevant significance (i.e., clinical meaning) of the clinical event by the use of standard n = 1 visual analysis procedures or standard statistical methods (e.g., chi-square). After things such as autocorrelation and individual time trends were statistically controlled, each additional youth increased the number of problematic behaviors by one behavior per youth per day on the Parent Daily Report. Copyright © 1994 American Psychological Association.

Program data are essential for the continued success of the Boys Town’s Treatment Foster Care Services program. This report presents the various categories of information that are gathered for the National Data Base. Among other benefits, the data base provides a comprehensive system for tracking children and treatment foster parents in the program. Copyright © 1994 Teaching Family Association.


Research has shown that sexually abused children display a number of behavior problems. Many of these children are placed in substitute care, especially foster homes. The current project was undertaken to measure foster parents’ perceptions about the behavior problems of sexually abused children in their care. Two studies were completed. The first was a large survey of foster parents in a Midwestern State. The second study utilized a sample of foster parents to complete a standardized behavior inventory which has previously been used in child sexual abuse research. The types of behavior problems described by foster parents and implications for future research are discussed. Copyright © 1994 The Haworth Press, Inc.


The Boys Town National Data Base collects information on each Boys Town child and family involved in the Home’s residential, foster care, family preservation, and parenting programs. The information is used in program management, evaluation, and research. This article explains the type of data that is collected and the usefulness of such a comprehensive data base. Copyright © 1993 Foster Family-Based Treatment Association.
In-Home Family Services®

The main goal of In-Home Family Services is to prevent children from being placed outside of the home and/or to reunify them with their family if outside placement is necessary. Boys Town’s In-Home Family Services® provide a family-centered, skill-based intervention for families that are in or near a crisis situation, and are at risk for having a child removed from the home. Intervention duration ranges from short term to long term, and service intensity ranges from highly intensive to less intensive, depending on a family’s needs. Boys Town Family Consultants are available 24/7 and work with families in their homes to help caregivers build on their strengths, improve their parenting skills and identify community resources and supports. Services focus on the entire family. Consultants also help families learn how to solve problems that may threaten their stability or the children’s safety after the intervention ends.

Published


Assessing the implementation of home visitation interventions for families with at-risk children is an essential component of effective service delivery; however, collecting implementation assessment data is expensive. This study examined two different methods of assessing the adherence and quality of a home visitation program, provider self-reports of service delivery, and video observations of the home visit that assessed a total of 64 sessions. Detailed transcriptions were also coded with regard to quality of skills instruction. The two implementation assessment methods overlapped considerably regarding whether a core topic was discussed during the home visit and the percentage of time spent during the average session on many of the core components. Areas of divergence between the two assessment methods are reviewed. Implications for supervision and quality improvement efforts of home visitation providers are discussed. Copyright © 2015 Taylor & Francis.


This study evaluated the Boys Town In-Home Family Services (IHFS) model with families referred by child welfare for issues related to maltreatment. Participants were 135 parents (mean age = 32.15 years, SD = 9.13) who completed intake and discharge assessments. The target child ranged in age from one month to 17 years (M = 4.54, SD = 4.38). We had a high-risk sample (e.g., 57% and 41% of parents reported being victims of physical and sexual abuse, respectively; 24% of parents reported attempting suicide in their lifetimes). The intervention was implemented with a degree of fidelity consistent with model standards. Reduced levels of perceived stressors were found for several domains of functioning with the largest effects observed for family safety, parental capabilities, and environmental factors. Results serve as an important step in building the evidence base of a widely disseminated intervention. Copyright © 2015 Taylor & Francis.


Families oftentimes struggle with issues that seem too burdensome to bear alone. In an effort to alleviate this burden, Boys Town partnered with the Nebraska Region VI Office of Mental Health to provide in-home services to families calling the Nebraska Family Helpline. Results indicate that families experienced a significant reduction in stress and were able to remain intact. Follow-up data indicate that outcomes were maintained up to twelve months after case closure. This preliminary evidence suggests that this type
of early intervention can have an impact on families not involved in public systems, but who are voluntarily asking for help. Copyright © 2016 Taylor & Francis.


This paper describes the components of a programme designed to prevent child maltreatment which includes the promising practices of a continuous engagement process, cognitive-behavioural parent and skill teaching, and development of formal and informal supports for families. The programme was also designed to be implemented wide scale. Methods for assessment of strengths and needs, individualization of goals and intervention strategies, and assessment of goal achievement are also described. Finally, preliminary results of a programme implementation fidelity and outcome evaluation are summarized. The authors conclude that this programme is ready for a more rigorous efficacy trial to continue to build the evidence base for this promising intervention addressing a prevalent social problem. Copyright © 2013 Blackwell Publishing Ltd.


This article describes key practices and strategies to engage families in their own homes who may not respond to typical office-based interventions.


Performance management systems provide child welfare agencies with tools to monitor program components, make real-time changes, and build an empirical base for the intervention. The two primary components of the performance management system discussed in this paper are balanced scorecards and dashboards. The goal is to provide an overview of the process, to describe how a performance management system was developed and the rationale behind it, and to provide examples of how the process was implemented at a national and site level. The paper provides an overview of performance management systems and an example of how performance management tools can be applied to child welfare agencies. These tools can assist in planning and quality improvement and can be used to support the ongoing development of an empirical base for service programs. Copyright © 2012 Elsevier Ltd.


This study examined the effects of the Boys Town In-Home Family Program (BT-IHFP) on parenting skills, family functioning, and child behavior for at-risk families involved with child protective services. The BT-IHFP is designed as a home-based, family-centered alternative to out-of-home placement with the goal of improving family functioning, keeping families together, and preventing further involvement with child protective services. The model uses a hands-on cognitive-behavioral approach, promotes family engagement, provides 24/7 services to families, and links families to community resources. While it is essential to examine ultimate, long-term outcomes such as family preservation, it is also important to investigate the proximal and intermediate outcomes that address the key changes in behavior that support successful long-term outcomes. The goals of this study were to (1) examine the pre-post change of proximal and intermediate outcomes and (2) examine if improvements in parenting skills, parental roles, and parental stress (proximal outcomes) will be related to improvements in child behavior at home, child behavior at school, and family functioning (intermediate outcomes). Inspecting intake and discharge data for 44 families, 94% were intact at discharge and significant pre-post improvements were found in proximal and intermediate outcomes. These findings suggest that this six-week intensive BT-IHFP holds
promise for teaching at-risk families skills to promote positive family functioning. Copyright © 2012 Springer.


This study examined the effects of the Boys Town In-Home Family Program on improving child behavior and parenting skills. The three-month parenting intervention was delivered to parents in their homes. All children were referred to the program by school personnel. Of the 107 families that enrolled in the study, 79% completed the intervention. Pre-post assessments of child behavior indicated significant improvements on Internalizing and Externalizing problem behavior as measured by the Child Behavior Checklist. Significant gains were found on all child, family, and school behavior subscales of the parent version of Behavioral Emotional Rating Scale. Service provider ratings of child problems and parental capabilities (as assessed by the North Carolina Family Assessment Scale) also demonstrated significant improvement from intake to discharge. These results indicate that the In-Home Family Program is a promising approach for serving at-risk children and their families. Copyright © 2011 National Dropout Prevention Center/Network.


This study explored the perceptions of fidelity to family group principles using comparative information from family, friends, and professionals, taking into account race and gender. White respondents felt that there was a greater degree of fidelity than did the African American respondents, with Other race respondents sometimes rating similarly to both White and African American respondents. Professionals generally perceived a greater level of fidelity and there were significant race by respondent interactions. Copyright © 2011 Child Welfare League of America.


This report describes the results of analyses of available data provided by Boys Town on services received through the Family Centered Services program, data from the school district on children’s characteristics and behavioral and academic outcomes from the 2004–2005 through the 2008–2009 school years, and DCF records on child maltreatment. Copyright © 2010 Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago.


Findings from research on family preservation programs have been mixed, with some finding positive effects and others either no effects or negative effects (Kauffman, 2007). Outcomes of family preservation programs are most often assessed based on re-referral to child welfare services or child removal from the home. However, these outcomes are often influenced by other factors (e.g., changing state policy; resources of child protective agencies) and do not necessarily give a clear indication of family improvement or of the effectiveness of family preservation programs (Cash & Berry, 2003). Therefore, the purpose of the current study was to evaluate a commonly used family preservation program using outcome measures that were more indicative of family progress and which may serve as precursors to re-referral or out-of-home placements. Specifically, the current study sought to identify levels of child behavior and strengths, family functioning, parenting practices, and parenting stress prior to participation in a family preservation program and examine changes that occurred across these constructs following participation. Copyright © 2009 The de la Parte Institute.

With the national movement to identify and implement evidence-based treatments, model fidelity has emerged as a central issue. This is a pilot study designed to test and refine a comprehensive model fidelity package for a recently revised ecological family-based services program. Tools included an observation technique, service delivery tracking form, consumer survey, and file review process. Results suggested that the observation instrument and the service delivery tracking form were the most practical model fidelity assessment tools, and they proved useful for treatment supervisors in helping family consultants adhere to the program model. Copyright © 2007 The de la Parte Institute.


Family Centered Services (FCS) is a program designed to treat at-risk children and their families in their own homes and schools. The primary goal of the program is to prevent more serious problems that may require out-of-home placement. Evaluating the effectiveness of this program requires choosing outcomes that are predictive of long-term success for these families and children. A comprehensive evaluation system was developed to track program implementation and outcomes. Selected outcome data from the Boys Town FCS program in Palm Beach County are presented. Participants reported significant improvements in child behavior problems, parenting stress, and referral problems at discharge. These improvements were maintained at 90-day follow-up. Copyright © 2001 The de la Parte Institute.
Community Support Services provide a wide variety of resources that can help children and families learn how to help themselves, or receive specialized care or education assistance in specific locations. These services can help create a layer of prevention so that children and families don’t need other services within the Integrated Continuum of Care in the future.

Outpatient Behavioral Health therapists work with children, infants to teens, and their families, to identify and treat difficult youth issues. Children benefit from individual treatment plans that focus on teaching skills and achieving lasting positive results.

### In Press


### Published


The present study examined the daily, bidirectional relationships between sleep and mental health symptoms in youth presenting to mental health treatment. Youth aged 6 to 11 (36% female, 44% European American) presenting to outpatient behavioral health treatment (N = 25) were recruited to participate in the study. Children and parents completed daily questionnaires regarding the child’s sleep, mood, and behavior for a 14-day period, while youth wore an actigraph watch to objectively measure sleep. Examining between- and within-person variance using multilevel models, results indicate that youth had poor sleep duration and quality and that sleep and mental health symptoms were highly related at the daily level. Between-person effects were found to be most important and significant bidirectional relationships exist. Identifying and addressing sleep problems in the context of mental health treatment is important, as poor sleep is associated with increased symptomology and may contribute to worsened mental health. Copyright © The Author 2016. Published by Oxford University Press on behalf of the Society for Pediatric Psychology.


This chapter describes behavioral pediatrics and recommends it as an area of potential growth for the field of applied behavioral analysis. In the paper, behavioral pediatrics is defined, its primary areas of interest are described, and its primary modes of treatment are also described. Multiple clinical examples are included ranging from routine behavior problems through major and minor incontinence up to life threatening feeding disorders.


Behavior analysis is a generic science, and Skinner’s vision for it was that it would become a mainstream force, relevant for most if not all human concerns, major and minor. Clearly his vision has not been realized. Determining why this is the case would require a complex multifactorial analysis. One likely
factor is that the majority of its basic science findings have been obtained from the study of rats and pigeons. Another likely factor, one directly addressed by this paper, is the majority of its applied science findings have been obtained from the study of people in only one tail of the normal distribution. Regardless, those outside the field see the relevance of behavior analysis to general human affairs as very limited. Whether the path behavior analysis is on will lead to widespread perception of mainstream relevance anytime soon seems doubtful. An alternative route would involve integrating it with a field that has already made the trip successfully. A premier example involves primary medical care. This paper argues for the integration of behavior analysis with pediatric primary care, sketches a method for its accomplishment, and uses diurnal enuresis to illustrate the requirements of the method. Copyright © 2010 Association for Behavioral Analysis International.


The main purpose of this chapter was to present primary care behavioral pediatrics as a partial solution to the problems occupying the gap in behavioral health care between primary medical care and mental health services for children with behavioral problems. Copyright © 2008 John Wiley & Sons, Inc.


Behavioral pediatrics (BP) is a branch of pediatrics that integrates behavioral and pediatric sciences to promote the health of children. A unique aspect of BP is that competencies for practice can be met by physicians or psychologists, and thus its practitioners include both. This chapter is a multi-component description of this area of psychology. Copyright © 2005 Sage Publications, Inc.


Psychotropic medications are frequently utilized to treat child and adolescent behavioral and emotional problems. This brief chapter grossly outlines efficacy and side effects of major classes of psychotropic medications given to children and adolescents for a variety of diagnoses. Copyright © 2004 Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers.


Behavioral pediatrics is the branch of pediatrics that addresses child behavior problems that populate the intersection between clinical child psychology, child psychiatry, and pediatric health care. This paper is a comprehensive description of behavioral pediatrics, its logical location in primary care, some of its conceptual underpinnings, and a case description. Copyright © 2002 Elsevier Science.


Behavioral pediatrics is the branch of pediatrics that focuses on the relationship between behavior and pediatric health care. The scope of the field is quite broad and includes the study of: 1) the evaluation and treatment of behavior problems in primary care settings; 2) the influence of biologic variables on behavior; 3) the effects of behaviors or emotions on biologic variables; and 4) the interaction between biologic and behavioral factors in the evaluation, treatment, and outcome of medical problems. This chapter reviews behavioral approaches to pediatric problems in children and adolescents. Several behavioral pediatric topics are described, and an analysis is provided to show the benefit of a confluence between applied behavior analysis and pediatric medicine. Copyright © 2000 Context Press.

It is estimated that enuresis affects 5 to 7 million children in the United States. Although the problem is common and well known, appropriate and effective treatment is not always provided. This may be due to the many etiological theories associated with this condition as well as a correspondingly high number of interventions. This present paper summarizes the empirical literature regarding primary nocturnal enuresis (PNE), with an emphasis on pharmacological and behavioral interventions. The data support the view that children with enuresis have a wide range of negative experiences that can affect self-esteem and development, but that enuresis is not associated with significant psychiatric or behavioral difficulties. Given the strong empirical support for several interventions for PNE, children who have this condition should not go untreated. Copyright © 1994 Human Sciences Press, Inc.


We studied the extent to which children in alternative community mental health programs exhibited clinically significant behavior problems at entry. The community programs included parent training, family preservation, and residential care. Comparison groups included outpatient pediatrics, outpatient psychology, and inpatient psychiatry. We used two standardized assessment instruments: the Eyberg Child Behavior Inventory (study 1) and the Child Behavior Checklist (study 2). The results from study 1 show the scores from parent training and outpatient clinic were equivalent, clinically significant and higher than the normative group. The results from study 2 show that the externalizing scores from children in family preservation and residential treatment were equivalent to those from inpatient psychiatry and significantly higher than those from outpatient clinic. The internalizing scores from family preservation and residential treatment were equivalent to each other, higher than those from outpatient clinic, and lower than those from inpatient psychiatry. Collectively, the results of the two studies suggest that the community programs studied are functioning as true alternatives for children with mild to severe externalizing problems and mild to moderate internalizing problems. Copyright © 1993 The de la Parte Institute.
Community Support ServicesSM
School-Based ProgramsSM

Community Support Services provide a wide variety of resources that can help children and families learn how to help themselves, or receive specialized care or education assistance in specific locations. These services can help create a layer of prevention so that children and families don’t need other services within the Integrated Continuum of Care in the future.

School-Based Programs provide a variety of training and instruction resources for teachers, administrators and other school staff that can support or enhance an educational environment. Training programs are based on the Boys Town Education Model, which focuses on skills teaching, relationship building and effective discipline procedures. Boys Town also developed the Reading Is FAME® program to teach poor readers in early adolescence how to read. FAME includes four one-semester courses: Foundations, Adventures, Mastery, and Explorations.


Students with persistent disruptive behavior problems lose valuable time in academic lessons, are a distraction for classmates, and cause stress for teachers. Recent meta-analyses indicate that 87% to 92% of published studies on school-based interventions targeting student problem behaviors report results from demonstration projects (involving highly trained staff under ideal circumstances) rather than routine practice programs. This study investigates the routine use of a schoolwide classroom management program and its relationship to elementary students’ social and academic outcomes. Three years after training in the classroom management program, 56 second-, third-, and fourth-grade teachers in an urban school district were assessed for fidelity to the program. Program fidelity was determined via direct observation in the classroom and validated by teacher self-ratings of fidelity and administrator ratings of teacher fidelity. Dependent variables included student engagement during academic lessons, out-of-school suspension rates, and report card grades. Results indicated that high program fidelity was significantly related to greater academic engagement and fewer suspensions, but not higher report card grades. This study adds to the scant literature on implementation fidelity of routine programs with high-risk populations. Copyright © 2011 Taylor & Francis Group, LLC.


This study examined the effects of low and high levels of fidelity with the Girls and Boys Town Well-Managed Classroom (GBT WMC), a school-wide classroom management program, on Hartford (CT) Public Schools elementary students’ classroom behavior and suspension rates. Fifty-six teachers from eight elementary schools participated in the study. Those teachers who provided a high dosage of the GBT WMC had more students on task and fewer students suspended than teachers providing a low dosage of the intervention. Copyright © 2007 The de la Parte Institute.


This article describes a study examining the effects of a student and family assistance center and school-wide classroom management program in a middle school that serves students from a high-crime, high-poverty urban community. The participating middle school serves over 1,100 students with high-risk
profiles. Results suggest that use of student and family assistance centers and the Girls and Boys Town Well-Managed Classroom helps increase on-task behavior during academic lessons, reduce in-school and out-of-school suspensions, and improve scores on standardized tests of reading and writing with high-risk students. Copyright © 2007 The de la Parte Institute.


This paper presents an overview of the transtheoretical model (TM) of change and use of the TM to explain an experienced, urban middle school teacher’s resistance to implementing a classroom management program. The TM identifies six stages of change and nine change processes that serve as a catalyst for movement through the stages (Prochaska, 2000). This instrumental case study describes a teacher who habitually raised her voice in response to student misbehavior. After assessing the frequency with which she raised her voice, she implemented classroom management strategies that led to an 82% baseline-to-intervention decrease in the use of a raised voice, another 14% decrease at 3-year follow-up, and increases in student on-task behavior. The teacher’s progression from resistance to implementation was consistent with the TM’s stages of change. Copyright © 2006 Mid-South Educational Research Association.


A reading program builds upon the strengths of students who are reading below grade level, increases their success in school, and reduces their risk of dropping out. Students in the program make roughly a one-year grade equivalent gain for each semester of instruction. The program stresses low student-to-teacher ratios, teacher-student conferences, and parental involvement. Copyright © 2005 National Association of Secondary School Principals.


Providing vocabulary instruction is one of the most significant ways in which teachers can improve students’ reading and listening comprehension. It can also be one of the most challenging things for teachers to do well. This article describes a 16-week intervention in which the comprehension of middle and high school students reading below grade level was improved significantly by instruction that developed their vocabularies through listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Guiding principles for the intervention are discussed and sample activities are provided. Copyright © 2001 International Reading Association.


This article describes a longitudinal study of specialized programs, which implemented the Girls and Boys Town Education Model with children who have serious emotional/behavioral disorders (SE/BD). Over 2,000 students participated in the study. SE/BD students showed gains in social skills from the start to the end of the school year. On average, office referrals for discipline problems were reduced for students in the program for two years. Copyright © 2000 Teaching Family Association.


This article describes the Boys Town Education Model and reports on its effectiveness in a large, urban elementary school. Two years after the Model was implemented, this school saw a 52 percent reduction in school suspensions, and teachers reported that the majority of their students were paying attention in
class, following instructions, and participating in classroom activities. The article also discusses the Boys Town Safe and Effective Schools Program. Copyright © 1999 The Alliance for Children and Families.


In this book, the authors present a remedial program for adolescents who are behind in reading as much as five to six grade levels. With this program, students make impressive gains in reading of about two years for every year of instruction; thus, it is possible to bring most of them up to grade level. The program, based on research and practice in reading and reading disabilities, has great simplicity, and does not require elaborate and expensive teacher training. Copyright © 1998 Brookline Books.


This report consists of a summary of outcomes documented through evaluation of the Boys Town Education Model. The studies described were performed in elementary and middle school regular education settings. The summary also includes a brief description of the Education Model. Copyright © 1998 Boys Town Press, Inc.


Seven years of dedicated work has produced a remarkable program that accelerates reading growth in teenagers who have fallen behind. Reading Is FAME, created by the Boys Town reading center, combines back-to-basics teaching methods and customized computer programming in a progressive curriculum that motivates students to improve their reading and comprehension skills. Soon to be disseminated nationwide, the program creates a climate for progress while teaching students the learning skills they need for success in school, home, and community. Copyright © 1998 Agency for Instructional Technology.


This study evaluated the implementation of the Boys Town Educational Model (BTEM), a social skills training model, with severely emotionally disturbed/behaviorally disordered students in the Georgia Psychoeducational Network. The treatment group (received BTEM) was composed of 189 students (61 elementary and 128 adolescent); the control group (did not receive BTEM) was composed of 56 students (21 elementary and 35 adolescent). The dependent measure was the Walker-McConnell Scale of Social Competence and School Adjustment. Results indicated that students in the treatment group made significant gains in social skills and school adjustment while students in the control group did not. Discussions of the results are provided. Copyright © 1998 Alpine Psychoeducational Program.


This chapter discusses the similarities and differences that exist among children, adolescents, and adults who are learning to read and to show how understanding these can help us to better understand how to develop reading abilities in adolescents and adults. The author focuses on three components of reading that theory and research have identified as important sources of developmental differences: word identification, knowledge of word meanings, and comprehension. Copyright © 1997 Brookline Books.

A laboratory for older adolescents with reading problems, the goal of Boys Town’s Reading Center is to develop research-based programs that prove effective in Boys Town’s schools and to disseminate those programs to other schools around the country. Toward these goals, the Reading Center has developed the Boys Town Reading Curriculum. This article describes the Curriculum, along with the research and experiences that led the authors to design the Curriculum the way they did. Copyright © 1997 National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy.


Boys Town offers the “Consumer Satisfaction Survey” as a way to tap the insight of the youth we serve and to make data-based decisions about improving the learning environment. This article describes how to create, administer, interpret, and act upon the survey results in order to bridge the gap between students and teachers. Copyright © 1997 National Education Service.


This study evaluated the effects of performance feedback on levels of treatment integrity in school-based behavioral consultation. Three teachers employed in a residential treatment community were responsible for treatment implementation. Treatment integrity was defined as the percentage of 2 minute intervals during which contingent teacher reinforcement for student on-task behavior was directly observed. Teacher and child behavior was monitored across baseline, traditional consultation, and consultation with performance feedback conditions in a multiple baseline design. Following a Problem Identification Interview and Problem Analysis Interview (Bergan, 1977), mean levels of treatment integrity for the three teachers ranged from 9% to 37%. The addition of a performance feedback package increased treatment integrity for all three teachers to levels ranging from 60% to 83%. The findings contribute to a growing literature supporting the need for direct assessment of treatment integrity in school-based consultation research and practice. Copyright © 1997 American Psychological Association.


Trial lessons are tasks designed to test students’ potential to learn under different instructional conditions. This chapter reviews such assessment techniques and gives a specific example of how trial lessons may be used to assess knowledge of word meanings. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the practical implications of trial lessons for both classroom instruction and diagnosis of reading difficulties. Copyright © 1997 Brookline Books.


A number of research programs demonstrate the value of early intervention when children experience difficulties in learning to read. For hundreds of thousands of adolescents and young adults, however, the opportunity for early intervention is long past. In this chapter, a research-based remedial program directed toward reversing the reading failure of socially and emotionally at-risk high school youth is described. Four interventions designed to meet the reading needs of such students are presented. For each intervention, the goals, activities, and materials used in the course are described, and the tests and test results used to establish the effectiveness of each course are discussed. From the data collected thus far, this approach to diagnosis and remediation holds great promise for other adolescents and adults with severe reading difficulties. Copyright © 1996 Prentice-Hall.

This study examines students' perceptions of personal and behavioral factors believed to influence strategy use and self-regulated learning. Comprehension performance was also examined based upon differences in strategy use, interest, and self-regulation. Eighth-grade students (n=11) were interviewed after reading a passage from a social studies textbook. Students were asked about the strategies they used, and the factors that influenced their strategy use. Results indicate that interest in the text topic was perceived by a majority of students to influence strategy use. Self-observation was related to the type of goal students set during reading. Performance differences were found among students based upon strategy use and self-regulation, but not based upon interest in the text topic. Implications are discussed in terms of classroom strategy training and enhancing middle-school students' motivation. Copyright © 1996 National Middle School Association.


Young people who cannot read or read poorly drop out of school and much too often wind up in jail. This article describes Boys Town's answer to that problem: the Boys Town Reading Curriculum. Hyland describes the problem of teenage illiteracy in America, along with Boys Town's program, its implementation, and the lessons learned in evaluating its outcomes. Copyright © 1996 Jessie Ball duPont Fund.


The language of practitioners and researchers working with troubled children typically emphasizes deficiency rather than strength (Cambone, 1995), with the result that programs designed to help meet at-risk children's needs are steeped in that negative world-view. The same tends to be the case in educational settings, where programs too frequently are based on systems of coercion, attitudes of deficiency, and stigmatization, rather than on support for students with emotional behavioral problems. The emphasis is on “what's wrong,” rather than “what's right” with kids. This article describes a comprehensive alternative to the “what's wrong” model of education for troubled students. The Boys Town Education Model currently is being used by several thousand educators in both regular and special education settings. Copyright © 1995 Circle of Courage.


The authors assess how widespread illiteracy might be in American society and explore the causes and correlates of illiteracy. The article also includes descriptions of various programs that are being used to deal with the problem. Copyright © 1994 Macmillan Publishers Ltd.


In this article, Curtis responds to an essay written by David Flinders and Elliot Eisner, who suggest that educational criticism should be viewed as a form of qualitative research. Curtis argues for the need to consider research and criticism as different forms of inquiry, leading to different forms of understanding, each with its own kind of limitations. Copyright © 1994 The National Council of Teachers of English.


The effectiveness of the Laubach Way to Reading (1991) program was examined with four adolescents with learning disabilities who were reading below the fifth-grade level. Over the course of the instruction, students made significant gains on tests of basic reading skills and comprehension. Students' success with
the program seemed to depend, however, on being provided with supplemental lists of more challenging words that incorporated the letter-sound correspondences being taught by the Laubach program. Copyright © 1994 Blackwell Publishing.


In this study, a holistic approach was used to evaluate the writing skills of high school students attending a residential treatment program for adolescents. Students were asked to produce spontaneous writing samples in response to a standardized prompt in the fall and spring of the 1990-91 school year. A total of 740 writing samples were scored by faculty members at the school. Results indicated significant gains in writing skills for students during the year. The criteria used to score the writing sample developed into an instructional tool for teaching writing skills. Applications of the assessment process and scoring criteria to student monitoring and classroom instruction are described. Copyright © 1993 Pergamon Press Ltd.


This chapter identifies several major trends emerging from a review of what research has to say about teaching the disabled or below-average reader. With respect to the causes of reading failure, the authors describe how the focus of research has shifted away from the study of basic psychological processes and toward study of the reading process itself. As researchers have come to focus on the reading itself as the cause of reading problems rather than as just a symptom, concerns have been raised about the appropriateness of existing diagnostic methods and techniques. So too has research raised doubts about instructional techniques that target the reading skills of specific groups of children. Instead, Chall and Curtis say current research supports teaching designed to improve specific areas of need in reading. Their chapter concludes with a discussion of some of the features that research suggests are critical for remediation to be successful. Copyright © 1992 International Reading Association.


Curtis, Director of the Boys Town Reading Center, reviews *The Schoolhome: Rethinking Schools for Changing Families* by Jane Roland Martin. Martin says in her book that a new concept of schools is needed, one that is appropriate to changing social conditions. She suggests “schoolhomes” where children can learn social skills that they are not being taught outside school.


Curtis discusses the importance of providing reading instruction for high school students that is appropriate to each student’s academic, social, and cognitive developmental level. This article includes brief assessments of reading programs Boys Town has used and an evaluation.


Coming up with ways to provide less-skilled adolescent readers with word identification practice they find enjoyable can be a challenge to teachers. This article presents various activities that can make such practice fun and effective. Copyright © 1992 International Reading Association.
Community Support Services provide a wide variety of resources that can help children and families learn how to help themselves, or receive specialized care or education assistance in specific locations. These services can help create a layer of prevention so that children and families don't need other services within the Integrated Continuum of Care in the future.

The Boys Town National Hotline® (800.448.3000) is a free resource and counseling service that assists callers 24/7, 365 days a year, nationwide. Open to everyone, but with an emphasis on helping children and parents, the Hotline has trained professional counselors who provide emergency or direct assistance, or refer callers to community resources. The Hotline receives about 185,000 calls a year.


We describe over 300,000 crisis calls made to a large national hotline over a 5-year period. Callers consisted of males and females between the ages of 10 and 89. Overall, a slight majority of callers were first-time callers (52%) and most (73%) sought assistance with issues related to parenting, youth concerns, and mental health. Across the lifespan, issues dealing with loneliness increased with age whereas depression-related calls decreased. Additionally, females were more likely than their male counterparts to call the hotline by over a 2-to-1-margin. Findings lend preliminary support to the efficacy of crisis call centers to utilize a flexible, yet well-defined problem-solving approach to assist those of all ages calling with the wide range of problems. Copyright © 2008 Springer Netherlands.


More than 63,000 adolescents, aged 10 to 19 years, called a notional crisis hotline from September 1991 through June 1992. Nearly 73% of these (N = 46,392) were coded as crisis calls. Developmental trends were identified for various aspects of support-seeking by examining differences in proportions of calls within defined categories across these years. Calls for support for issues related to relationships accounted for nearly half of all calls by these young people. Within the broad category of relationships, specific trends included decreasing numbers of calls about peer relations from age 13 through 19; decreasing calls about parent-child relations from 11 through 19; and increasing calls about marriage beginning at age 15. Calls with concerns about sexuality increased steadily to a peak at age 16, and calls with concerns about addictions increased steadily from age 13. Sex differences were found for length of calls at each age and for the various categories of support-seeking. Copyright © 1995 Elsevier.
Community Support Services provide a wide variety of resources that can help children and families learn how to help themselves, or receive specialized care or education assistance in specific locations. These services can help create a layer of prevention so that children and families don’t need other services within the Integrated Continuum of Care in the future.

Common Sense Parenting® provides parents and other caregivers with proven techniques that can help them build good family relationships, prevent and correct misbehavior, use consequences to improve behavior, teach self-control and remain calm. This instruction is generally provided in the community and schools in both formal and informal settings.


The purpose of our study was to learn about barriers to participation faced by families who had signed up for but not completed a community-based parenting program that was not part of a research project. We also sought to gauge interest in alternative, web-based methods of delivering a parent training intervention. Semi-structured phone interviews were conducted with 27 parents who had signed up for but not completed a community-based parenting program. Results indicated that practical reasons such as scheduling were the most common barrier faced by parents. Results also suggested substantial interest in alternative web-based and hybrid models of program delivery. Hybrid models would allow participants to move between face-to-face small group classes and web-based classes; allowing for easy make-up of missed small-group sessions. Interventions designed by community organizations and researchers should consider using alternative methods, including hybrid models, of program delivery in order to reach a larger number of individuals. Copyright © 2015 Springer.


This study examined how child and parent reports of parenting were related to early adolescent substance use and school suspensions. Data were from two time points 6 months apart on 321 families with an eighth-grade student attending one of five schools in the Pacific Northwest. Child- and parent-report measures of family management practices were moderately correlated ($r = .29$). Child report, but not parent report, of more positive family management practices uniquely predicted a lower likelihood of adolescent substance use. Also, discrepancies between child and parent report of parenting predicted substance use, with child positive report of family management losing its protective association with adolescent substance use when parents had negative reports of their parenting. Parent report, but not child report, of better parenting predicted lower likelihood of suspensions, suggesting that the salience of child and parent report may depend on the type of behavioral outcome. Copyright © 2014 SAGE Publications.


This randomized controlled trial tested a widely used general parent training program, Common Sense Parenting (CSP), with low-income 8th graders and their families to support a positive transition to high school. The program was tested in its original 6-session format and in a modified format (CSP-Plus), which added 2 sessions that included adolescents. Over 2 annual cohorts, 321 families were enrolled and randomly assigned to either the CSP, CSP-Plus, or minimal-contact control condition. Pretest, posttest, 1-year follow-up, and 2-year follow-up survey data on parenting as well as youth school bonding, social skills, and problem behaviors were collected from parents and youth (94% retention). Extending prior
examinations of posttest outcomes, intent-to-treat regression analyses tested for intervention effects at the 2 follow-up assessments, and growth curve analyses examined experimental condition differences in yearly change across time. Separate exploratory tests of moderation by youth gender, youth conduct problems, and family economic hardship also were conducted. Out of 52 regression models predicting 1- and 2-year follow-up outcomes, only 2 out of 104 possible intervention effects were statistically significant. No statistically significant intervention effects were found in the growth curve analyses. Tests of moderation also showed few statistically significant effects. Because CSP already is in widespread use, findings have direct implications for practice. Specifically, findings suggest that the program may not be efficacious with parents of adolescents in a selective prevention context and may reveal the limits of brief, general parent training for achieving outcomes with parents of adolescents. Copyright © 2016 APA.


Adolescent problem behaviors are costly for individuals and society. Promoting the self-regulatory functioning of youth may help prevent the development of such behaviors. Parent-training and family intervention programs have been shown to improve child and adolescent self-regulation. This study helps fill gaps in knowledge by testing for indirect effects of the Common Sense Parenting® (CSP) program on reduced substance use, conduct problems, and school suspensions through previously identified short-term improvements in parents' reports of their children's emotion regulation skills. Over two cohorts, 321 low income families of 8th graders were enrolled and randomly assigned to either the standard CSP program, an adapted CSP Plus program, or a minimal–contact control condition. Pretest, posttest, 1-year follow-up, and 2-year follow-up survey assessments were completed by parents and students with 94% retention. Intent-to-treat multivariate path analyses were conducted. Neither intervention had statistically significant total effects on the three targeted adolescent outcomes. CSP, but not CSP Plus, had statistically significant indirect effects on reduced substance use and school suspensions at the 1-year follow-up as well as conduct problems and school suspensions at the 2-year follow-up through increased child emotion regulation skills at posttest. Findings provide some support for emotion regulation as one pathway through which the intervention was associated, indirectly, with reduced substance use, conduct problems, and school suspensions among at-risk students over the high school transition. Copyright © 2015 Elsevier Ltd.


Engaging and retaining participants are crucial to achieving adequate implementation of parenting interventions designed to prevent problem behaviors among children and adolescents. This study examined predictors of engagement and retention in a group-based family intervention across two versions of the program: a standard version requiring only parent attendance for six sessions and an adapted version with two additional sessions that required attendance by the son or daughter. Families included a parent and an eighth grader who attended one of five high-poverty schools in an urban Pacific Northwest school district. The adapted version of the intervention had a higher rate of engagement than the standard version, a difference that was statistically significant after adjusting for other variables assessed at enrollment in the study. Higher household income and parent education, younger student age, and poorer affective quality in the parent–child relationship predicted greater likelihood of initial attendance. In the adapted version of the intervention, parents of boys were more likely to engage with the program than those of girls. The variables considered did not strongly predict retention, although retention was higher among parents of boys. Retention did not significantly differ between conditions. Asking for child attendance at workshops may have increased engagement in the intervention, while findings for other predictors of attendance point to the need for added efforts to recruit families who have less socioeconomic resources, as well as families who perceive they have less need for services. Copyright © 2014 Springer.

The 3 most frequently examined elements of treatment fidelity are adherence, dosage, and quality. The relationships between these fidelity elements are complex, and additional research is needed to provide clarity. Improving clarity may be especially relevant to parenting programs, which tend to include direct explicit instruction (DEI) elements (i.e., instruction, modeling, and practice). The adherence to and dosage of these DEI elements are frequently assumed to improve program quality; however, little information is available to determine if such adherence and dosage affect program quality. This study examines whether adherence to and dosage of DEI elements predict quality ratings for a widely disseminated, manualized parenting program. Adherence is defined as the percentage of intervention tasks completed for each DEI element. Dosage is defined as the number of minutes and seconds spent in each intervention DEI element. Treatment fidelity is assessed for 36 of 144 sessions across 10 program facilitators. A hierarchical linear regression analysis examines the contributions of adherence and dosage in the prediction of session quality ratings. The analysis indicates that adherence accounts for a significant proportion of the variance (26%), whereas dosage contributes a nonsignificant proportion of variance (11%). Adherence to skill practice was the strongest individual predictor (β = .445, p < .01). Findings suggest that ensuring a high degree of adherence can contribute to quality program delivery. However, more exploration is needed to better understand the ways in which adherence and dosage of DEI elements affect program quality. Copyright © 2015 University of Chicago Press.


This study tests Common Sense Parenting (CSP)®, a widely used parent-training program, in its standard form and in a modified form known as CSP Plus, with low-income 8th graders and their families during the high school transition. The six-session CSP program proximally targets parenting and child emotion regulation skills. CSP Plus adds two sessions that include youth, and the eight-session program further targets skills for avoiding negative peers and activities in high school. Over two cohorts, 321 families were enrolled and randomly assigned to either CSP, CSP Plus, or minimal-contact control conditions. To date, pretest and posttest assessments have been completed, with 93% retention over about a 6-month interval. Here, analyses of preliminary outcomes from pretest to posttest focus on data collected from parents, who represent the primary proximal intervention targets. Intent-to-treat structural equation modeling analyses were conducted. CSP and CSP Plus had statistically significant effects on increased parent-reported child emotion regulation skills. CSP Plus further showed a statistically significant effect on increased parent perceptions of their adolescent being prepared for high school, but only in a model that excluded the CSP condition. Neither program had a significant proximal effect on parenting practices. Emotion regulation, one indicator of self-control, is a robust protective factor against problem behaviors. Intervention effects on this outcome may translate into reduced problems during high school. Moreover, CSP Plus showed some limited signs of added value for preparing families for the high school transition. Copyright © 2014 Springer.


Many evidence-based preventive interventions have been developed in recent years, but few are widely used. With the current focus on efficacy trials, widespread dissemination and implementation of evidence-based interventions are often afterthoughts. One potential strategy for reversing this trend is to find a promising program with a strong delivery vehicle in place and improve and test the program’s efficacy through rigorous evaluation. If the program is supported by evidence, the dissemination vehicle is already in place and potentially can be expanded. This strategy has been used infrequently and has met with limited success to date, in part, because the field lacks a framework for guiding such research. To address this gap, we outline a framework for moving promising preventive interventions that are...
Common Sense Parenting is a parent-training program that is widely disseminated, has promising preliminary support, and is being tested in a randomized controlled trial that targets lower-income, urban 8th-grade students and their families (recruited in two annual cohorts) to improve the transition to high school. The workshop-based program is being tested in both standard 6-session (CSP) and modified 8-session (CSP Plus) formats; CSP Plus adds adolescent-skills training activities. To offer a comprehensive picture of implementation outcomes in the CSP trial, we describe the tools used to assess program adherence, quality of delivery, program dosage, and participant satisfaction, and report the implementation data collected during the trial. Results indicated that workshop leaders had high adherence to the program content and manual-stated goal times of the CSP/CSP Plus curriculum and delivered the intervention with high quality. The majority of intervention families attended some or all of the sessions. Participant satisfaction ratings for the workshops were high. There were no significant cohort differences for adherence, quality and dosage; however, there were significant cohort improvements for participant satisfaction. Positive fidelity results may be due to the availability of detailed workshop leader guides, in addition to ongoing training and supervision, which included performance-based feedback. Copyright © 2015 Elsevier.


Adolescence can be a period of increased problem behavior, and parents often report this stage of development as being one of increased conflict with high levels of parenting-related stress and lower levels of confidence in parenting abilities. As a result, parents of adolescents seek out parenting information and support much more often than do parents of younger children. However, most parent training programs have been developed for parents of children aged 12 and under; very little is known about the use of parent training programs for parents of adolescents. Therefore, the purpose of this article was to examine the use of a behavioral parent training program for a population of parents with adolescent-aged youth to identify the characteristics of participants and examine pre-post changes. On average, both the parents and their youth had a high number of risk factors (e.g., substance abuse, domestic violence, clinical levels of problem behavior) when the program began. Significant changes were observed across both youth behavior and parent stress. Implications and directions for future research are discussed. Copyright © 2010 National Dropout Prevention Center/Network.


This article describes an ecological approach to the evaluation of outcomes in programs designed to prevent child behavior problems. In this approach, client needs, program components, and outcomes must all have logical relationships and be rooted in child treatment theory and research. Evaluation studies on Boys Town’s Common Sense Parenting Program were outlined as an example. Copyright © 1998 The Alliance for Children and Families.
Three hundred and seventy-nine parents at 25 Air Force bases participated in a collaborative child physical abuse prevention project designed by the USAF Family Advocacy Program and Father Flanagan’s Boys’ Home. Participants attended the Boys Town Common Sense Parenting Program as part of a comprehensive prevention effort. These participants were active duty or civilian employee parents and their spouses who completed the Boys Town Common Sense Parenting Program as part of a comprehensive prevention effort. We hypothesized that participants would report decreased child behavior problems, improved relationships with family members, and reduced risk for child abuse after attending parenting sessions. Results supported this hypothesis. The data were also analyzed to determine the frequencies of individual parents who made statistically reliable changes on the dependent measures using Jacobson’s Reliable Change Index. Nineteen to 30% of the participants reported significant improvement in the areas assessed. Parents who improved in abuse risk were at a higher level of risk and were less satisfied with family relationships prior to their participation than those who did not. Copyright © 1997 Human Sciences Press, Inc.


Archival data from 304 mothers who attended group parent training were used to test for age effects on statistical and clinical significance of improvements in child behavior problems following participation in the program. The Total Problem T score from the Child Behavior Checklist served as the dependent measure for all analyses. Results indicated that, for the total sample, the severity of problem behaviors before treatment was the best predictor of treatment outcomes. When the sample was divided into age groups, older children had more severe behavior problems before treatment, but all groups improved. When outcomes were examined for clinically significant improvements, adolescents had the lowest rate of clinical recovery, but the only significant predictor of treatment effects was again the severity of behavior problems before treatment. In general, the data supported the null hypothesis that group parent training is effective for children from early childhood through adolescent. However, positive group parent training outcomes for families with children of any age was best predicted by the seriousness of the child’s behavior prior to treatment. Copyright © 1996 Elsevier Ltd.


Outcomes from a parenting program that was modified to reduce costs and a wait-list control condition were compared. Costs were reduced by over 50%. Sixty-six parents participated. Treatment parents reported significantly greater improvement in child behavior problems, parent attitudes, and satisfaction with family relationships when compared to untreated controls. These effects were maintained at three months’ follow-up. Outcomes for 35 of the children in the sample who had clinically significant behavior problems before treatment were also examined separately. The difference between clinical recovery rates, i.e., movement from the clinical to normal range during treatment, for control and treatment children was not statistically significant. Limitations of the current study and suggestions for future research are discussed. Copyright © 1996 Human Sciences Press, Inc.


Alternative mental health services for children, such as parent training, are expanding across the country. Yet the clinical picture of the children served in these programs is incomplete. In two studies, we compare the scores from standardized behavior problem inventories for groups of children from a parent training class with scores of groups of children from a clinic and non-clinic setting. In study one we used the Eyberg Child Behavior Inventory (ECBI), an instrument that primarily assesses externalizing problems. In study two, we used the Child Behavior Checklist (CBCL), an instrument that assesses both externalizing
and internalizing problems. The results from both studies show that scores from the parent training groups were equivalent to scores from the clinic groups and were significantly higher than the scores from the non-clinic groups. These results suggest parent training classes serve children with clinically significant problems. Copyright © 1993 John Wiley & Sons, Inc.


Parent training programs have been an effective intervention for middle-income families with children who have developmental, learning, and behavioral problems. Results have been mixed with low-income families. In the current study, a practical parenting program was tested with both middle- and low-income parents. Results indicate significant improvements for families of both income groups. These effects were maintained at 3 months follow-up. Implications of parenting programs and further research are discussed. Copyright © 1993 National Council on Family Relations.
Parent Connectors is a promising peer-to-peer family support program developed to increase parents’ engagement in their child’s educational and mental health services. Core components of Parent Connectors include the provision of emotional support (e.g., to reduce feelings of blame and stigma), instrumental support (e.g., basic needs such as clothing, food, and housing assistance), informational support (e.g., special education regulations and procedures, strategies to support academic and behavioral success), and the promotion of positive attitudes toward building social support networks and positive relationships with community providers. The core components of this intervention are delivered to participants through weekly phone calls from veteran parents, referred to as Parent Connectors. During the provision of services, a licensed mental health practitioner provides weekly supervision to Parent Connectors to monitor implementation of the intervention.


Parents of children with emotional and behavioral needs frequently experience difficulty navigating community-based services for their child, as well as experience increased stress and parental strain. Peer-to-peer support programs are an emerging approach to assist these parents, and evidence suggests that they are effective in increasing parents’ perceptions of social support, self-efficacy, and well-being. However, these programs often focus on parents of youth with diagnosed mental health disorders, despite the potential benefit for parents of youth who are at-risk for significant emotional and behavioral problems. In the current study, we used a pre-post design to evaluate a community-based, peer-to-peer support prevention program delivered via telephone to parents (N = 139) of youth with emerging behavioral and emotional difficulties. We evaluated (1) whether the intervention was delivered as designed, (2) the pre- and post-intervention gains in social support and concrete support, and (3) whether parents’ level of participation in the intervention and program adherence predicted outcomes. Results indicated that the intervention was delivered as intended and resulted in increased parental perceived social support and concrete support over time. Furthermore, higher levels of parental participation and intervention adherence were associated with increases in perceived social support. Thus, findings suggest that it may be beneficial for parents of at-risk youth with significant emotional and behavioral difficulties to engage in a peer-to-peer phone support prevention program. Copyright © 2015 Springer.
As youth progress in their treatment at Boys Town, their goals and therapeutic needs change. As such, while receiving services, youth may progress through a number of Boys Town programs with each providing differing levels of restrictiveness. For example, it is not uncommon for a youth to enter the Integrated Continuum of Care at the Intensive Residential Treatment Center, progress to a Specialized Treatment Group Home, and lastly be admitted to a Family Home. During this time, the family may be receiving services through our Common Sense Parenting Program. It is this Integrated Continuum of Care that allows children and their families to receive the treatment that meets their needs while maintaining a consistent therapeutic philosophy.

In Press


Aftercare services have been suggested to improve the outcomes of youth who depart group homes. The purpose of this study was to collect views from social service agency leaders about the aftercare supports they believed were most important for youth departing group homes. This project used a survey method and gathered views from 38 agency leaders who were 28–66 years of age, with an average of 21 years of experience working with residential care programs in 23 states across the United States. Participants ranked seven support domains (i.e., family, education, mental health, relationships, physical health, safety, and independent living) and rated 56 specific aftercare supports based on importance for youth who were departing group homes and returning to their homes/schools prior to high school graduation. Results suggested family, safety, and mental health supports were the most important domains of support for aftercare. Specific aftercare items that were rated critically important included support for self-harm/suicidal thoughts, accessing mental health services, coping with trauma, and managing medication for behavior/mental health. Tables are provided for the complete list of 56 specific support ratings. The findings are summarized and limitations are discussed. Also included are the implications the findings could have regarding future research on the design of aftercare services. Copyright © 2016 Springer.

Published


Aftercare has been suggested to improve the outcomes of youth who depart group homes. This project used a survey method to collect data from 38 agency leaders from across the United States on the aftercare supports they believed were available for youth departing group homes and returning to their homes/schools prior to high school graduation. The results revealed that 34% of agencies provided an aftercare service with a model, and 29% of agencies received external funding for aftercare. The findings are summarized and limitations and implications for future research are discussed. Copyright © 2016 Routledge.


For youth placed in out-of-home residential care, there has been a trend towards shorter lengths of stay and earlier reentry into the community. In order to support reentry, we propose blending out-of-home residential care with aftercare services. In this study 89 youth that were in or at risk of entering the juvenile justice system received a unique blend of a behavioral-focused residential care program with a family based in-home aftercare service. Results indicate that youth displayed decreased behavior
problems and families practiced improved parenting skills at discharge. Further, at discharge from services youth were reported to engage in more positive interactions with peers. Follow-up data also suggested that at 12 months post-discharge, these youth had a high rate of remaining arrest-free, were living in a homelike setting, and had either graduated or were attending school. Copyright © 2014 Springer.


While much is known about youth struggles after reintegration into home and community settings following stays in out-of-home care, little is known about best practice in aftercare, family preparedness for the reintegration process, or youth and caregiver needs during this transition period. As part of a large Institutes of Education Sciences Goal 2 grant focused on the development and preliminary testing of an aftercare reintegration intervention, this study was designed to answer the following questions: 1) what are youth and parent perceptions of transition planning, family preparedness, and aftercare at discharge from a residential treatment setting, 2) how prepared do youth and parents believe youth are for the upcoming transition, and 3) do youth and parents differ in regards to perceptions of the benefits of aftercare supports and services for successful reintegration? Participants included youth discharging from a residential Treatment Family Home (TFH) program in Omaha, Nebraska, and their parents. Youth were eligible to participate if they were scheduled to depart from their TFH between April and June of 2010. Youth and parents who agreed to participate completed surveys with questions focused on four areas of interest: 1) Demographics, 2) Transition Planning, 3) Transition Preparedness, and 4) Importance of Specific Aftercare Services. The final sample consisted of 48 matched youth and parent surveys. Outcome data suggests that there are significant differences between parents and youth with regards to the importance of aftercare and youth level of preparedness. With regard to the perceived importance of aftercare, 58.3% of parents felt that an aftercare program would be “very” important, while only 33.2% of youths indicated the same ($p < .01; r = 0.28$). Even greater disparities were found when asked about their likelihood of participation in aftercare, as more than 58% of parents reported that they would be “very” likely to participate as compared to less than 23% of the youth ($p < .001; r = 0.37$). Of the seven areas of perceived preparedness, parents were significantly less confident in the youth’s preparedness than the youth in three areas: relationships (youth $M = 2.49$; parent/caregiver $M = 2.17$; $p < .01$; $r = 0.29$), family (youth $M = 2.42$; parent/caregiver $M = 2.10$; $p < .05$; $r = 0.27$), and independent living (youth $M = 2.20$; parent/caregiver $M = 1.90$; $p < .05$; $r = 0.22$). The results of this study have potential implications for youth, parents, out-of-home service providers, and researchers involved with transition planning and aftercare. Authors discuss the potential benefits of changing traditional approaches to reintegration, and elaborate on the need for additional research on aftercare supports for youth and families. Copyright © 2014 Elsevier Ltd.


Youth served in residential care often demonstrate significant educational and behavioral gains during treatment; however, struggles evidenced during the reunification and reintegration process underscore the importance of continued aftercare services and supports. While these needs have been widely noted in the literature, little is known about youth perceptions regarding the importance of aftercare or preferences regarding specific supports. The purpose of this study was to assess the views of youth discharging from a residential program on perceptions of transition planning and aftercare, preparedness for the reintegration, and perceptions regarding specific services and supports. One-hundred and thirty-two youth served in a large residential care facility were asked to complete a Youth Aftercare Survey prior to departure to determine youth perceptions. Overall, results revealed high levels of youth optimism about their preparedness for the upcoming transition and identified supports in education, relationships, physical health, independent living, and family as most important to the reintegration process. Although promising findings were revealed regarding youth perceptions of the importance of continued supports...
across broad domains, youth were less concerned about mental health supports; a factor critical to long-term success. Implications, limitations, and future research are discussed. Copyright © 2014 NDPC/N.


The provision of aftercare services for youth and families is an important topic in residential care. Focus groups were conducted with seven service professionals working with youth in residential care in the United States. Providers responded to two questions: Based on your involvement in residential care 1) what barriers do providers experience when trying to access aftercare services for youth who are departing residential care; and 2) what solutions have providers attempted or recommended to overcome barriers so that aftercare services are made available to youth? Common themes for barriers included: 1) Youth/Family barriers to engagement; 2) Aftercare programming issues and concerns; 3) State, local, and agency policy; 4) Lack of funding; and 5) Lack of interagency collaboration. Common themes for solutions included: 1) Continuity of care; 2) State, local, and agency policy recommendations; 3) Family engagement; 4) Funding solutions; 5) Discharge planning; 6) Agency collaboration; and 7) Technology. Study limitations, future research, and implications are discussed. Copyright © 2014 Routledge.


Youth depart residential care with many continued risk factors, unique needs, and challenges as they reintegrate into the home, school, and community settings. Currently, there is limited research on needs and best practices in aftercare services and supports for youth departing from residential settings and even less is known about how these differ by gender. While preliminary studies have explored perceptions of need during reintegration and aftercare by youth and caregivers, little is known about how these may differ by gender or if perceptions change over time after experiencing the initial transition period. One way to address this knowledge gap is to identify how prepared males and females feel for reintegration in critical life domains, their beliefs about aftercare, and preferences regarding potential services or supports to aide in the reintegration at discharge. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to explore if males and females differ on preparedness for reintegration across critical life domains, beliefs about aftercare, and preferences regarding potential services or supports to aide in the reintegration at departure from a residential treatment facility (N = 132). Overall, very few differences were found between males and females at departure. Implications, limitations, and future research are discussed. Copyright © 2013 Elsevier Ltd.


Much is known about the services youths receive when placed in residential care, yet services in aftercare remain poorly defined. We describe a method of tracking service delivery in a newly developed aftercare program, On the Way Home (OTWH), for youths reintegrating into home, school, and community settings following a stay in a residential care. Results reveal that OTWH addressed key areas related to successful transition outcomes and provided broad supports across settings. Moreover, the service delivery monitoring process provided important information to program developers and service providers regarding implementation issues such as provider caseloads and resource allocations. Copyright © 2013 Taylor & Francis Group, LLC.

This study compares the On the Way Home (OTWH) aftercare program to traditional aftercare supports on placement and school stability for 82 youth (43 treatment, 39 control) with disabilities discharging from residential care. One-year-post-discharge results revealed that negative event occurrence (i.e., returning to care or discontinuing enrollment in the community school) was three to over five times less likely for OTWH youth compared to youth in the control condition. Copyright © 2013 Child Welfare League of America.


This study examined the 12-month post-departure outcomes for youth who exited a residential treatment program at differing levels of restrictiveness. Study participants were 120 youth who entered an integrated residential continuum of care at its most restrictive level and then either departed the program at the same level or stepped down and departed at a lower level of restrictiveness. Results indicate that youth who stepped down and exited at the lowest level of restrictiveness were the most likely to be living at home or in a homelike setting and experienced fewer formal post-departure out-of-home placements. However, there were no differences in post-departure rates of substance use, arrests, or being in school or having graduated. These results suggest that youth who were served in the integrated continuum and departed at the lowest level of restrictiveness had more positive outcomes at 12-month post-discharge. Copyright © 2012 Elsevier Ltd.


Reintegrating into the home, school, and community settings following a stay in out-of-home care can present significant challenges to school-aged youths. During this transition, social, behavioral, and educational challenges can result in placement instability, academic failure, and ultimately school dropout. This article describes a home and school-focused transition program, On the Way Home, which was designed to support youths, families, and schools during this critical reintegration period. The intervention model, preliminary data on program effects on youth placement and educational stability, and future research are discussed. Copyright © 2012 Elsevier Ltd.


This study examined patterns of movement for youth receiving services within a continuum of intensive and restrictive residentially-based programs. Data were collected for 701 completed episodes of care within a three-program residential continuum of care over a 5 year period, and examined time within program, movement between programs, in-program disruptive behavior, and discharge status. Results showed that most youth either remained in a stable placement in the least restrictive of the programs, or followed a pattern of placements that systematically moved them from more restrictive to less restrictive settings. Of note, transitions from more restrictive to less restrictive programs correspond to deescalating levels of problem behavior; and over 80% of the youth were stepped down to either family-based or independent living situations at the time of departure. Findings support the notion that a continuum of intensive residential services can serve the needs of youth with significant emotional and behavioral needs. Copyright © 2010 Elsevier.

Cognitive-behavioral and behavioral interventions have shown the most promise for reducing recidivism, and aftercare has been suggested as a promising approach to enhance these effects. This paper describes a pilot study of a cognitive-behavioral residential and aftercare intervention, using both process and outcome data. Thirty-three adolescents referred by juvenile courts for residential placement who had a goal of family reunification participated. Results indicate that youth had significantly decreased behavior problems and families had significantly improved parenting skills. Follow-up data also suggested that at six months post-discharge, youth who departed at home or in a homelike setting had a high rate of remaining arrest free, were still in a homelike setting, were attending school, and had remained drug and alcohol free. Finally, the data suggested that program implementation quality and outcomes improved over the course of the study. Implications for future research and practice are discussed. Copyright © 2010 Joseph Cautilli and BAO Journals.


For many adolescents with disabilities the reintegration into the home and school settings following a stay in out-of-home care is fraught with difficulties. Although many return to environments that do not facilitate school success, few services and supports are available. As a result these youth are more likely to demonstrate poor homework completion, academic failure, and dropout prior to graduation. To date, no known empirically based intervention exists to address these risks and support these youth and their families during this critical reintegration period. This article reports the findings from Phase 1 in the development of an academic-based aftercare for adolescents reintegrating into the home and community school settings following a stay in out-of-home care. Data were collected from 31 youth, parents, and school professionals through 9 structured nominal group technique focus groups to determine factors that would contribute to participant buy-in and long-term participation. Common themes identified include the desire for program flexibility, 24-hour on-call support, and well trained, supportive staff. Service and training implications, study limitations, and future research are discussed. Copyright © 2010 Elsevier.


Group-care programs are often criticized for producing poor outcomes, especially in light of community-based alternatives like treatment foster care that have a stronger evidence base. In this study, data from Girls and Boys Town were used to compare outcomes of youth in treatment foster care (n = 112) and group care (n = 716) using propensity score matching, a method that can minimize selection bias in nonrandomized designs. Eighteen background covariates were used to develop propensity scores for the likelihood of receiving treatment foster care rather than group care. Several matching methods generated balanced samples on which the outcomes were compared. Results found that group-care youth were more likely to be favorably discharged, more likely to return home, and less likely to experience subsequent placement in the first six months after discharge. Legal involvement and residing in a home-like environment at follow-up did not differ. Positive outcomes for group-care youth suggest that family-style group-care programs may promote effectiveness. Copyright © 2007 Elsevier Ltd.


A key concept in the continuum-of-care model is matching the restrictiveness of treatment to the level of youth behavior problems. Restrictiveness refers to the degree that treatment and setting constrains choices and limits freedoms of patients. Only a few investigators have examined this relationship, and the findings have been equivocal. Extending our initial study of the relationship between youth behavior problems and program restrictiveness, we examined the relationship across seven programs spanning the continuum of care: parent training program, outpatient clinic, family preservation program, treatment
foster care, residential group home, acute-care shelter, and inpatient psychiatric hospital. Results indicated a high level of correspondence between restrictiveness and youth behavior problems, with the least restrictive programs serving children with fewer behavior problems and highly restrictive programs serving children with more behavior problems. Copyright © 1998 SAGE Publications, Inc.


A fundamental goal of the continuum of care concept is high correspondence between child dysfunction and program intrusiveness. Yet the small body of relevant research has identified major discrepancies. We used the Child Behavior Checklist to compare entry-level behavior problems of children from five child mental health programs sequenced in order of level of intrusiveness: Outpatient clinic, parent training, intensive family preservation services, residential care, and inpatient hospitalization. Our results contrast with existing research by showing correspondence between level of child dysfunction and program intrusiveness. A possible reason for our contrasting results is that we included a larger number of mental health programs than were used in previous studies. These results are important because they reflect the continuum of care concept being put into practice and support the assertion that increasing mental health options with alternative community mental health programs increases the chances of appropriate treatment for children in trouble. Copyright © 1993 John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
Parental Discipline

There is a strong relationship between behavioral and emotional problems in children and discipline methods used by parents. In order to effectively help parents, it is necessary to have some fundamental understanding of the ways parents interact with and discipline their children. Research in this area indicates that parents of young children who use a combination of reasoning and consequences have the most success in preventing future behavior problems.


The present study included observational and self-report measures to examine associations among parental stress, parental behaviour, child behaviour, and children’s theory of mind and emotion understanding. Eighty-three parents and their 3- to 5-year-old children participated. Parents completed measures of parental stress, parenting (laxness, overreactivity), and child behaviour (internalizing, externalizing); children completed language, theory of mind, and emotion understanding measures. Parent-child interactions also were observed (N=47). Laxness and parenting stress predicted children’s theory of mind performance and parental usage of imitative gestures and vocalizations accounted for unique variance in emotion understanding. Associations also were found between child behaviour and emotion understanding. Results provide support for direct and indirect associations between parent-child interactions and early social-cognitive development. Copyright © 2009 John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.


This meta-analysis investigates differences between the effect sizes of physical punishment and alternative disciplinary tactics for child outcomes in 26 qualifying studies. Analyzing differences in effect sizes reduces systematic biases and emphasizes direct comparisons between the disciplinary tactics that parents have to select among. The results indicated that effect sizes significantly favored conditional spanking over 10 of 13 alternative disciplinary tactics for reducing child noncompliance or antisocial behavior. Customary physical punishment yielded effect sizes equal to alternative tactics, except for one large study favoring physical punishment. Only overly severe or predominant use of physical punishment compared unfavorably with alternative disciplinary tactics. The discussion highlights the need for better discrimination between effective and counter productive use of disciplinary punishment in general. Copyright © 2005 Springer Science+Business Media.


This article expands in two ways on Funderburk’s discipline ladder, which organizes disciplinary responses from gentle (ask nicely) to aversive (time out). The first issue concerns the role of disciplinary reasoning in a parent’s sequence of disciplinary tactics, based on research showing that a combination of reasoning and negative consequences is optimal, even for young preschoolers. The second issue is to clarify the role of more aversive tactics in backing up milder tactics, thereby making the milder tactics more effective by themselves subsequently. Copyright © 2005 The Association for Advancement of Behavior Therapy.


Children learn how to behave. Significant adults in children’s lives, especially parents, are their primary teachers. Behavioral theory is based upon principles of learning derived from empirical investigation. The
Parental Discipline

application of learning principles to assist people in living more adaptively is often termed behavior therapy. A discussion of how behavioral research and its application can inform us about the causes of corporal punishment and its effect on children, families, and society is of great utility. This chapter discusses the topic of corporal punishment of children from a behavioral-theory and behavior-therapy perspective. Basic principles of learning theory will be presented, followed by information based upon the work of behavioral clinicians. The goal is to address the question, “How can we better understand the causes and consequences of corporal punishment and utilize this knowledge in an objective way to assist families in the important process of raising their children to be secure, adaptive, and productive people?”

Copyright © 2005 Yale University Press.


**Objective.** This study examines ethnic group differences in the relation between parents’ use of physical discipline and children's externalizing behavior problems in younger children and assesses both same-source and distinct-source data. **Design.** One hundred and twelve mothers of African American ($N = 63$) and European American ($N = 49$) children were interviewed regarding their parenting strategies and their child’s behavior. Preschool teacher ratings of child behavior were obtained. **Results.** Regression analyses revealed significant main effects for gender and discipline on externalizing behavior problems. Two-way interactions with ethnicity were significant, but only when predicting teacher-rated behavior problems. Post-hoc analyses showed that for African American men, there was a significant negative correlation between mother-reported physical discipline and teacher-rated externalizing behavior problems. Similar correlations for African American women and the European American gender groups were not significant. **Conclusions.** These findings show ethnic differences in the relation between physical discipline and externalizing behavior problems for young children when distinct-source information is obtained. The study extends the literature by showing this effect is particularly strong for boys. Copyright © 2004 Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.


This is a research-based overview of parental discipline. It covers the goals of discipline, proactive discipline, and discipline responses to misbehavior. It integrates complementary perspectives from child development and from clinical child psychology, culminating in a conditional sequence of discipline responses that resolves contradictions between the two perspectives. Copyright © 2003 Macmillan Reference Books.


E. T. Gershoff (2002) reviews processes that might mediate and contexts that might moderate the associations between corporal punishment (CP) and child behaviors and provides an account of the methodological weaknesses of the research reviewed in her meta-analyses. In this examination of Gershoff, the authors argue that the biases and confounds in the meta-analyses further limit any causal inferences that can be drawn concerning the detrimental “effects” of CP on associated child behaviors. The authors suggest that undesirable child outcomes are associated with CP because the construct marks inept harsh parenting, and they conclude that although the harmful effects of physical abuse and other extreme punishments are clear, a blanket injunction against spanking is not justified by the evidence presented by Gershoff. Copyright © 2002 American Psychological Association, Inc.


A conditional sequence model of discipline responses has the potential to resolve longstanding controversies about parental discipline. The Conditional Sequence Model holds that optimal discipline responses begin with mild disciplinary tactics, such as reasoning, but progress to more forceful
Parental Discipline

disciplinary tactics if milder tactics achieve neither adequate compliance nor an appropriate resolution. The more forceful tactics would initially consist of nonphysical consequences, such as time-out. The most forceful tactics, such as nonabusive spanking, would be reserved as a backup for time-out. The article shows how this Model is consistent with several lines of empirical evidence, some of which is otherwise counterintuitive. Copyright © 2001 The University of Wisconsin Press.


This article updates the only previous systematic literature review of child outcomes of nonabusive and customary physical punishment by parents. The outcomes differ by methodologic, child, and subcultural factors as well as by how the physical punishment was used. All six studies that used clinical samples (including four randomized clinical studies) and all three sequential-analysis studies found beneficial outcomes (e.g., reduced noncompliance and fighting). Five of eight longitudinal studies that controlled for initial child misbehavior found predominantly detrimental outcomes of spanking. However, those detrimental outcomes were primarily due to overly frequent use of physical punishment. Furthermore, apparently detrimental outcomes have been found for every alternative disciplinary tactic when investigated with similar analyses. Such detrimental associations of frequent use of any disciplinary tactic may be due to residual confounding from initial child misbehavior. Specific findings suggest discriminations between effective and counter productive physical punishment with young children. More research is needed to clarify the role of spanking and alternative disciplinary tactics in control system aspects of parental discipline. Copyright © 2000 Springer Science+Business Media.


This letter critiques the “Guidelines for Effective Discipline,” adopted by the American Academy of Pediatrics in 1998. The guidelines are outstanding in many respects, but adopt a one-sided approach to two scientific controversies. On the first controversy, it prefers nonphysical consequences, such as time-out and privilege removal, to reasoning. On the second, it adopts a premature opposition to almost all spanking. The one-sided approach to both controversies results in opposing about two-thirds of the disciplinary responses that parents of preschoolers actually use, including all of the ones that were most effective at delaying misbehavior recurrences in research on 2- and 3-year-olds. Copyright © 1999 American Academy of Pediatrics.


Sweden’s 1979 law banning corporal punishment by parents was welcomed by many as a needed policy to help reduce physical abuse of children. This study reviews the published empirical evidence relevant to that goal. Only seven journal articles with pertinent data were located. One study reported that the rate of physical child abuse was 49% higher in Sweden than in the USA, comparing its 1980 Swedish national survey with the average rates from two national surveys in the United States in 1975 and 1985. In contrast, a 1981 retrospective survey of university students suggested that the Swedish abuse rate had been 79% less than the American rate prior to the Swedish spanking ban. Some unpublished evidence suggests that Swedish rates of physical child abuse have remained high, although child abuse mortality rates have stayed low. A recent Swedish report suggested that the spanking ban has made little change in problematic forms of physical punishment. The conclusion calls for more timely and rigorous evaluations of similar social experiments in the future. Copyright © 1999 Ammons Scientific, LTD.


The best studies of nonabusive physical punishment have found beneficial outcomes for children from two to six years old. No adequate study has shown better outcomes associated with any alternative discipline response for children under 13. Spanking works best when used to back up less aversive discipline responses, especially reasoning and time out. It should be used nonabusively, privately, and flexibly by parents who communicate positive concern for the child within and outside the context of a
discipline incident. Nonphysical punishment is the only alternative that has the same beneficial motivational characteristics when used to back up reasoning in preschoolers. The article concludes by briefly considering the consistency of these findings with relevant Scriptures. Copyright © 1998 American Association of Christian Counselors.


This letter identifies: (1) an unconditional anti-spanking perspective, and (2) a more differentiated viewpoint that has emerged from two major 1996 national conferences. The unconditional anti-spanking stance takes any evidence against any use of physical punishment as evidence for its absolutist opposition to spanking. The differentiated viewpoint considers the full range of evidence to differentiate between effective and counterproductive use of physical punishment, as well as alternative disciplinary responses. Copyright © 1998 American Medical Association.


Three different analyses investigated the effect of disciplinary reasoning on subsequent misbehavior with 2- and 3-year-olds. The effectiveness of reasoning by itself depended on how often reasoning had been combined with punishment on other occasions. In the longitudinal analyses, the largest increase in disruptive behaviors by age 4 occurred when parents used reasoning frequently without backing it up with punishment. The largest decrease in disruptive behavior occurred when parents used reasoning frequently but backed it up with punishment when necessary. Copyright © 1998 Blackwell Publishing.


This article reviews legal criteria and empirical evidence as to whether nonabusive spanking should be legally prohibited or not. The legal standard of “clear and convincing evidence” represents the best balance between children’s and parents’ rights. The empirical evidence indicates that there is no minimally adequate evidence that nonabusive spanking is generally harmful to children. The article also responds to major points raised by absolutist anti-spanking advocates and considers cultural distinctions in the effectiveness of nonabusive spanking. Copyright © 1997 American Bar Association.


This is the first published review of child outcomes associated with parental use of nonabusive or customary physical punishment. Of the best 35 empirical studies, only one study found a detrimental child outcome to be associated with prior nonabusive physical punishment. Only two other studies of children under age 13 found a detrimental child outcome to be associated with prior physical punishment. Grounding (with teenagers) was the only alternative discipline associated with more beneficial child outcomes, whereas nine alternative discipline tactics were associated with more detrimental child outcomes. How parents discipline seems to be more important than whether they avoid the use of nonabusive spanking or not. Copyright © 1996 American Academy of Pediatrics.


To compare the effectiveness of maternal punishment (e.g., time-out, spanking), reasoning, and the combination of the two, 40 volunteer mothers recorded their responses to incidents of toddler fighting and disobedience in a structured diary for 4 weeks. Punishment frequency correlated positively with misbehavior frequency, but non-punishment response correlated even more strongly with misbehavior. The mean delay until a misbehavior recurrence was significantly longer after a punishment-reasoning
combination (e.g., 20.0 waking hours until a fighting reoccurrence) than after punishment. Copyright © 1996 Haworth Press, Inc.


Corporal punishment (i.e., any hitting of children, in any form) is common in this country as well as many others. Is it a form of abuse, or is it a necessary option for parents to use in socializing their children? Is it the reflection of cultural differences in parenting practices that should be respected? In this debate, two authors provide arguments against considering corporal punishment child abuse, one an academic and one the director of an organization called the Center for Affirmative Parenting. Copyright © 1994 SAGE Publications, Inc.


Behavior theories and Hoffman’s information-processing theory have differing implications for how the effectiveness of parental discipline varies according to the level of distress experienced by the child. Consistent with behavioral theories, punishment was more effective in delaying the next recurrence of disobedience when toddlers’ distress was high than when it was low or moderate. Consistent with Hoffman, reasoning and a punishment-reasoning combination were most effective at a moderate level of toddler distress. Thus, firm reasoning and a combination of reasoning with mild punishment are recommended. Copyright © 1994 Blackwell Publishing.


This study investigates age differences in the perceived frequency of discipline problems among preschoolers. There were clear-cut peaks in behavior occurrences at 30 to 36 months for total items and for four of five scales on the Toddler Behavior Checklist. However, by 48 months there were significant decreases from a peak in discipline problems only for the Physical Aggression and Immaturity scales. There were no gender or socioeconomic differences. Age-specific means and standard deviations provide a basis of comparison for family practitioners. Copyright © 1992 Blackwell Publishing.
Other Research
Behavioral Theory and Interventions

Since the mid-1990s, youth admitted to Boys Town programs and their families have presented a variety of clinical problems requiring specialized assessment and treatment methods. Therefore, it was necessary to develop and evaluate a number of clinical techniques that could be applied in treatment settings to address problems such as Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), bed-wetting and soiling, anger management, bedtime problems and sleep disorders, out-of-control behaviors, poor peer relationships, learning challenges, anxiety and worry, phobias, depression, and habits.

In Press


Time-out (TO) is one of the most common and effective disciplinary tactics used to address problem behavior; however, parents rate TO as one of the least useful behavior modification techniques. This may be due to a discrepancy between empirically supported TO procedures and how mothers are actually conducting TO. Fifty-five mothers were asked to define TO, provide information on how they conduct TO, and identify errors in TO procedures. Results indicate that maternal knowledge and implementation of TO differs considerably from the empirical ideal, potentially impacting the utility and frequency of TO usage in the home to address child problem behaviors. Copyright © 2016 Taylor & Francis Inc.


Published

The purpose of this study was to conduct a preliminary evaluation of a brief behavioral sleep protocol for enhancing standard behavioral treatment for child noncompliance among children with behavior problems. Data were drawn from an archival analysis of pediatric cases treated for noncompliance or disruptive behavior problems in an outpatient behavioral health clinic. A total of 50 cases (mean age = 7.6 years) were identified in which the brief behavioral sleep protocol was delivered prior to behavioral parent training, and weekly parent ratings of child sleep and compliance were collected. Repeated-measures analyses indicated a significant immediate improvement in both child sleep and compliance ratings following the brief behavioral sleep protocol and prior to initiating behavioral parent training. Analyses examining changes from pretreatment to the end of all treatment (including both sleep and behavioral parent training) indicated large improvements in parent ratings of child compliance, with an effect size much larger than typical effect sizes in the literature for behavioral parent training alone. Treatment effects did not significantly differ across 3 clinicians delivering the interventions. Results of this preliminary evaluation suggest that the addition of a brief behavioral sleep protocol at the beginning of standard behavioral treatment for child noncompliance can substantially improve treatment outcomes. Further evaluation using rigorous clinical trial methods and norm-referenced measures is needed, but this study suggests that addressing sleep problems may be an important component of optimal treatment for child behavior problems. Copyright © 2016 APA.


Of all that is known about children’s learning and behavior, one fact is very clear: Opportunities to promote optimal educational experiences are evident across many settings. The most influential environments that predict and support learning are the home and school. Learning and development do not occur in a vacuum; that is, events a child experiences in one setting (e.g., at home) influence and are influenced by events in the other (e.g., the classroom). Given that adults in these complementary settings control the events and conditions experienced by children, it follows that cooperation and coordination (in fact, collaboration) between setting sand the adults populating and driving them is a reasonable goal. Copyright © 2014 John Wiley & Sons, Inc.


Technology provides educators with significant advantages in working with today's students. Video self-modeling (VSM) is an evidence-based intervention requiring the use of technology that has been successfully used to address problems that children experience in schools. The present study tested a model of predicting educators’ use of technology-based treatments by accounting for perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, and treatment acceptability. Eighty-one interventionists completed a survey designed to measure perceptions of VSM. A factor analysis supported a three-factor model for the data (i.e., usefulness, ease of use, and treatment acceptability). A sequential multiple regression indicated that a significant portion of interventionists’ intention to use VSM can be accounted for by perceptions concerning the usefulness of digital camcorders, the ease of using digital camcorders, and the acceptability of the treatment. Each independent variable accounted for a significant portion of interventionists' intention to use VSM. Professional development sessions intended to improve intentions to use technology-based treatments such as VSM should specifically target technology variables (i.e., usefulness and ease of use) along with treatment acceptability. Copyright © 2014 Technology and Media Division of the Council for Exceptional Children.

Children’s early academic achievement is supported by positive social and behavioral skills, and difficulties with these skills frequently gives way to underachievement. Social and behavioral problems often arise as a product of parent–child interactional patterns and environmental influences. Few studies have examined the role of a salient aspect of children’s environments, community locale, in the relationship between parenting practices and child outcomes. Using a large, nationally representative sample, we examined whether preschool parenting practices and children’s social-behavioral skills in kindergarten were related to geographic setting (rural vs. city, suburban, and town). Results indicated that rural children experienced greater difficulties with parent-reported externalizing behaviors. Furthermore, rural parents displayed less emotional support than parents in other settings. Preschool parenting behaviors were associated with social skills and behavior problems in kindergarten, as reported by both parents and teachers. Parents’ emotional supportiveness was found to account for the relationship between geographic setting and parent-reported children’s social skills, such that rural parents who provided less emotional support had children with lower social skills in kindergarten. Findings of this research indicate that rural children may face particular risk for behavioral issues and highlight the need for increased behavioral supports in rural communities. Moreover, our results suggest that interventions designed to promote parents’ support of children’s emotions may have particular utility for rural families.


This chapter describes in meticulous detail the important dimensions of enuresis and encopresis, including definition, epidemiology, assessment and classification, etiology, and treatment. Although the chapter is richly descriptive, there is a definitive emphasis on treatment.


This chapter describes the bedtime pass, which is a viable and effective strategy to employ for children who present with bedtime struggles or bedtime refusal. Bedtime difficulties typically include resistance to going to bed and falling asleep. Such behaviors are reinforced or sustained by delaying bedtime, and maintaining contact with caregivers. Copyright © 2011 Elsevier, Inc.


This chapter is devoted to habitual stereotypical movements in typically developing children. Four examples are presented including thumb sucking, mail biting, Stereotypical Movement Disorder, and head banging. Each session includes segments focused on definition, epidemiology, clinical characteristics, prognosis, and treatment. Copyright © 2011 American Psychiatric Association.

The aim of this book is to provide readers with a practical overview of the definitions, characteristics, theories and models, diagnostic and treatment recommendations, and relevant aspects and methods of evidence-based psychosocial treatments for encopresis and enuresis, primarily in children. Although treatments and research for elimination disorders are reviewed in general, particular attention is directed at constipation and encopresis, toileting refusal, and diurnal and nocturnal enuresis due to the high incidence of these conditions in children. Case vignettes, websites, and suggestions for further reading are provided for the interested reader. Copyright © 2010 Hogrefe.


This chapter provides a brief description of encopresis: the definition, including subtypes; underlying causes; and treatment. Copyright © 2010 John Wiley & Sons, Inc.


This chapter provides a brief description of enuresis: the definition, including subtypes; underlying causes; and treatment. Copyright © 2010 John Wiley & Sons, Inc.


This is a brief description of enuresis, its causes, and treatment. Copyright © 2010 Oxford University Press.


This is a brief description of encopresis, its causes, and treatment. Copyright © 2010 Oxford University Press.


This is a brief description of when and how to begin toilet training. Copyright © 2010 Oxford University Press.


In this chapter, we describe the assessment and treatment of enuresis and encopresis. We first review literature on the symptoms, causes, and evidence-based treatments of each condition separately. We also incorporate a discussion of the mechanisms of change underlying effective intervention. Then, using Ryle’s (1949) distinction between “knowing how” and “knowing that” as a framework, we discuss the basic competencies one should possess to address these clinical issues. A major reason for distinguishing between the “knowing how” and “knowing that” skill sets is that some clinicians teach and others practice. Based on this framework, we argue that demonstration of basic competency entails the clinician having the skills to conduct effective assessment and treatment of enuresis and/or encopresis, or the skills necessary to tell others (e.g., supervisees) how to do so. These skills include a thorough knowledge of the
physiology of urination and defecation, potential pathophysiology of elimination disorders, the ability to effectively interface with medical providers regarding their treatment, and a strong working knowledge of evidence based treatments and their mechanisms of change. In our discussion of expert competency, we use no such distinction between “knowing how” and “knowing that”, as an expert should be skilled in both. Further, expert competency in enuresis and encopresis entails the verbal and performance knowledge base to make scholarly contributions to the field, either by conducting one’s own research or serving as a consultant to other research programs. Thus, an expert in this area is well poised to contribute to the field of elimination disorders as a master clinician, a specialty supervisor, and/or as a contributing researcher. Copyright © 2010 Springer.


Nocturnal enuresis is a very common parasomnia affecting 5-7 million children annually. It is largely an inherited condition wherein children involuntarily pass urine while they sleep. The moisture alarm is the single best evidence-based intervention to treat this disorder. This chapter provides a rationale and detailed description of how to use the moisture alarm intervention. Copyright © 2010 Elsevier.


Pica is an eating disorder typically defined as the persistent ingestion of nonnutritive substances for a period of at least 1 month at an age at which this behavior is developmentally inappropriate (e.g., >18-24 mo). This article provides an overview of the disorder, including differential diagnosis and workup, treatment and medication, and follow-up. Copyright © 2009 Medscape.


Rumination is characterized by the voluntary or involuntary regurgitation and rechewing of partially digested food that is either reswallowed or expelled. This article provides an overview of the disorder, including differential diagnosis and workup, treatment and medication, and follow-up. Copyright © 2009 Medscape.


Trichotillomania is characterized by the persistent and excessive pulling of one's own hair, resulting in noticeable hair loss. This article provides an overview of the disorder, including differential diagnosis and workup, treatment and medication, follow-up, and detailed photos. Copyright © 2009 Medscape.


This chapter provides a comprehensive review of sleep disorders among children and adolescents. The content addresses assessment, diagnosis, and treatment of sleep disorders. Factors that contribute to poor treatment response are also addressed. A refractory case is presented to illustrate the treatment approach with attention to the cognitive behavior therapy component of treatment. The book is intended for researchers, clinicians, and students. Copyright © 2009 Springer Publishing Company.

The chapter reviews all the relevant domains in behavioral assessment: definition of behavior, selection of behaviors to assess, measurement tactics, observational methods, reliability, validity, and functional analysis. Copyright © 2008 Allyn & Bacon, Inc.


This chapter provides an in-depth description of the biobehavioral treatment approach for encopresis. The chapter also includes a description of a preventive intervention for encopresis. Copyright © 2008 John Wiley & Sons, Inc.


This paper reviews the state of the scientific literature on enuresis and encopresis across all relevant dimensions of those disorders. Copyright © 2008 Springer Publishing.


This chapter describes the use of time-out as a child disciplinary tactic. Time-out is a procedure that minimizes preferred experience and is used in response to inappropriate child behavior. The underlying processes of time-out are explained and the evidence of effectiveness is reviewed. The author describes the role of time-in with respect to time-out. Steps describing the actual use of time-out are provided. For older children (i.e., ages 7 – 16) the use of task-based grounding is recommended. This approach combines the customary elements of grounding (e.g., restriction of freedoms) with performance-based release criteria. Copyright © 2008 John Wiley & Sons, Inc.


This article describes the functional assessment team at Boys Town. It is comprised of approximately two dozen staff from various departments who meet on a regular basis to evaluate challenging behaviors of youth who live on campus. The methodology used by the team to evaluate the functional components of these challenging behaviors is described. Copyright © 2008 Teaching-Family Association.


This chapter is a broad-based exploration of behavioral analytic theory and application as both pertain to children with developmental disabilities. In addition, a small subsection is devoted to routine behavior problems that occur in developmentally delayed and typically developing populations of children. Copyright © 2007 Brookes Publishing.

This chapter discusses the two most commonly occurring elimination disorders affecting children: functional encopresis (FE) and nocturnal enuresis (NE). The structure for each section is virtually identical: (a) a description of the disorders with information on diagnosis and assessment; (b) conceptualizations of the disorders discussed in terms of development, learning and modeling, parental issues, life events, genetic influences, peer influences, physical factors affecting behavior, drugs affecting behavior, and cultural and diversity issues; (c) behavioral treatment; (d) medical treatment; and (e) a case description. Because of space limitations, the section on enuresis is confined to the nocturnal type (NE), which is by far the most prevalent. Copyright © 2008 John Wiley & Sons, Inc.


Danger lurks in every part of human life, and fear is a ubiquitous human emotion. But human fear is not confined to true danger. The range of fear extends to almost all human experiences. People are afraid of sex, lack of sex, affection, lack of attention, being with others, being alone, flying, missing a flight, riding, missing a ride, walking, not being able to walk, getting lost, being found, eating too much, eating too little, and other examples too numerous to list. Humans are also afraid of more abstract phenomena such as the past, future, unknown, freedom, or restriction. Many people do not know why they are afraid nor what of, but they do experience chronic fear. Currently, the most widely used categorical term for fear that does not involve true danger is *anxiety,* and this chapter will address it from a functional perspective. Copyright © 2007 Elsevier Academic Press.


Objective: To evaluate the Bedtime Pass Program (BPP), an extinction-based procedure for treating bedtime resistance in typically developing children. Methods: A randomized, controlled trial in which nineteen 3- to 6-year-old children demonstrating bedtime resistance were randomly assigned to a Bedtime Pass or Monitoring Control group. The experimental condition involved parent monitoring plus the Bedtime Pass: a card exchangeable for one parental visit or excused departure from the room after bedtime, with parents ignoring subsequent bids for attention. Results: Children in the Bedtime Pass condition left their rooms and called and cried out significantly less frequently than controls. They demonstrated significant reductions in the time required to get to sleep each night. Treatment effects were maintained at 3-month follow-up. Parents reported high levels of satisfaction and treatment acceptability. Conclusions: BPP is a noncomplex, socially acceptable, effective treatment for bedtime resistance. It retains the powerful effects of extinction-based procedures without the “extinction burst.” Copyright © The Author 2006. Published by Oxford University Press on behalf of the Society for Pediatric Psychology.


This chapter begins with a brief overview of contingency management and related behavioral components. Next, developmental considerations in the use of contingency management to treat pediatric and adolescent obesity are considered. Third, practical applications and recommendations for practitioners working with children and families with medical and mental health clinics are provided. Finally, future research directions are discussed. Copyright © 2007 Routledge.
Behavioral Theory and Interventions


Two of the most common presenting complaints in primary medical care for children involve disordered elimination, specifically enuresis and encopresis. The vast majority of cases are functional and their comprehensive assessment readily yields the identity of functionally relevant variables that can either be modified through behavioral intervention or manipulated to bring about modifications in behavior related to elimination. This paper reviews the state of the science on encopresis and enuresis across all relevant dimensions. Copyright © 2007 Elsevier Academic Press.


Habit disorders, now subsumed under the diagnostic term stereotypic movement disorder, consist of repetitive, seemingly driven, and nonfunctional motor behaviors that interfere with normal activities or that result in bodily injury. This article provides an overview of the disorders, including differential diagnosis and workup, treatment and medication, and follow-up. Copyright © 2006 Medscape.


Encopresis is generally defined as fecal incontinence, not resulting from physiological defect, among children with the developmental ability necessary to attain continence. This paper provides a state-of-the-art description of treatment-based approaches to functional encopresis that are empirically supported. Copyright © 2006 Springer Publishing.


This paper provides a plain English description of contingent reinforcement along with multiple examples. Copyright © 2006 Norwegian Association for Behavior Analysis.

Friman, P. C. (2006). The future of applied behavior analysis is under the dome. The Association for Behavior Analysis International Newsletter, 29, 4-5.

This paper argues that if the field of applied behavior analysis is to expand, it must start to address problems that afflict the mainstream of the population in the United States. Tremendous gains have been made in extreme populations, such as individuals with serious disabilities. Much less progress has been made on problems that are less severe and more prevalent. Copyright © 2006 The Association for Behavior Analysis International.


The concept of reinforcement dramatically expanded the scientific capacity to predict and influence behaviors, and, for this reason, it has been a cornerstone of the science of behaviors as conducted by operant psychologists for almost 70 years (e.g., Skinner, 1938). This science is exceptionally conservative, and to say it does not readily admit new concepts into its canonical conceptual armamentarium is to underestimate the case radically. Nonetheless, a new concept, the establishing operation (EO), has emerged and is increasingly influencing not just interpretations of behavioral science but even its most conservative practitioners. Foreshadowed in the writings of Skinner (e.g., 1953) as well as seminal operant tests (e.g., Keller & Schoenfeld, 1950), the EO has been technically distinguished as a conceptual entity in its own right for only a little more than 20 years (Michal, 1982). Before delving into its origins and technical details, however, this chapter gives a brief discussion of motivational events, the overarching concept that includes EOs. Copyright © 2006 Brookes Publishing Co.

Functional encopresis (FE) refers to the repeated passage of feces into inappropriate places at least once per month for at least three months. Treatment of FE targets the processes that cause or exacerbate the condition, including reducing colonic motility, constipation, and fecal impaction. The cardinal elements of successful treatment include “demystifying” the elimination process, bowel evacuation, stool softeners, prompts and reinforcement for proper toileting habits, and dietary modifications. Despite misinformation and misinterpretations of encopresis, the assessment and treatment of this condition actually represent one of the most successful achievements of behavior therapy. Copyright © 2006 Joseph D. Cautilli.


Treatment effectiveness is a moot issue if treatment recommendations are not followed. Research indicates that approximately half the families receiving psychological services do not adhere to treatment recommendations. Although treatment adherence is problematic across clinical populations, it is particularly challenging with children and adolescents because there are at least two sources of non-adherence, the children and their parents. Thus, establishing acceptable levels of adherence requires examining parent and child variables that either facilitate or impede adherence to treatment recommendations. This article summarizes recent research on scientifically supported methods for improving compliance with prescribed psychological treatments by children and their parents. Copyright © 2006 SAGE Publications, Inc.


A positive reinforcer is a stimulus the presentation of which, or contact with which, increases the probability of responses that produce the presentation of contact. Positive reinforcement is the descriptive label for the relationship between the stimulus, the presentation or contact, and the change in probability. This chapter is a user-friendly description of positive reinforcement, a cornerstone of operant theory. Copyright © 2005 SAGE Publications, Inc.


A negative reinforcer is a stimulus the withdrawal or escape from which, or the postponement, termination, or avoidance of which, increases the probability of responses that produce any of the events. Negative reinforcement is the descriptive label for the relationship between the stimulus, the events, and the change in probability. This chapter is a user-friendly description of negative reinforcement, a complex concept in operant psychology. Copyright © 2005 SAGE Publications, Inc.


Time-out is the most commonly used procedure of child disciplinary tactic in the United States. This involves limiting a child’s access to preferred experiences, especially social interaction and all forms of entertainment. This chapter describes the concept of time-out, its theoretical background, its conceptual description, and steps toward effective use. Copyright © 2005 SAGE Publications, Inc.

Nocturnal enuresis is one of the most prevalent and distressing of all childhood problems. The treatment of nocturnal enuresis has shifted in the past few decades from a strictly psychopathological perspective to a biobehavioral perspective. Although the primary clinical features of this disorder are medical/organic, there is currently strong evidence for a behavioral treatment package consisting of the urine alarm and various skills-oriented components. Alternative devices, methods, and adjunctive components are reviewed and presented in the context of an optimal treatment plan. Copyright © 2005 Joseph D. Cautilli.


This article presents results from an investigation using functional assessment strategies in a general education classroom for an early adolescent diagnosed with ADHD/ODD. In the first phase of the assessment, data were collected from teacher interviews, student interviews, and direct observations to generate hypotheses regarding the association between classroom environmental conditions and the occurrence of disruptive behavior. The hypotheses were then evaluated in the context of regularly occurring classroom activities. Based on the data obtained through the functional assessment procedure, a classroom intervention was designed, implemented, and evaluated. Results indicated the intervention was successful in decreasing the participant’s disruptive behavior. Further, the teacher and student report high acceptability for the assessment and intervention. Project findings are discussed in terms of bridging the gap between research and practice, conducting a functional behavioral assessment (FBA) within applied settings, and the use of FBA for behaviors that are potentially under the control of multiple maintaining functions. Copyright © 2005 National Association of School Psychologists.


The current study constitutes the first attempt to generate repertoires of relational responding, as generalized operant behaviors, when they are found to be absent in young children, using interventions suggested by Relational Frame Theory. Three children, aged between four and six years, were exposed to a basic problem-solving task that involved two or three identically-sized paper coins in an attempt to test and train patterns of relational responding in accordance with more-than and less-than. On each trial, the experimenter described how the coins compared to one another in terms of their value, and the child was then asked to pick the coin that would "buy as many sweets as possible." All three participants failed to pass baseline tests for specific patterns of arbitrary more and less responding. Interventions suggested by Relational Frame Theory, including training and testing across stimulus sets, were then successfully used to establish increasingly complex patterns of relational responding in all three children. Generalization tests demonstrated that the relational responding successfully generalized to novel stimuli and to a novel experimenter. In addition, the use of a non-contingent reinforcement condition for one participant, during which no improvement was made, together with contingency reversals for all children, indicated that the trained and tested relational responding may be considered a form of generalized operant behavior. These findings lend positive support to Relational Frame Theory's approach to derived relational responding, and to the functional analysis of human language and cognition. Alternative interpretations of the data are also considered. Copyright © 2004 International Journal of Psychology and Psychological Therapy.


This chapter is a comprehensive description of enuresis, encopresis, and delayed toilet training. Included within the chapter are prevalence data, causes and correlates information, and recommendations for treatment. Copyright © 2004 Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.

Conduct disorder (CD) is one of the most prevalent childhood disorders and it accounts for more than half of all childhood clinical referrals. This brief chapter outlines diagnosis, prognosis, correlates, and treatment of conduct disorder. Copyright © 2004 Kluwer Academic / Plenum Publishers.


Diaper use is widespread and possibly even increasing across diverse populations in the United States, ranging from infants to very old adults. We found no reports of an experimental analysis of the effect of wearing diapers on the frequency of urinary accidents and attainment of continence skills (e.g., urinating in the toilet). In this study, we used a withdrawal design to evaluate the effect of wearing diapers on daily urinary accidents and successful voids for an adult who had been diagnosed with mental retardation. Results indicated that wearing diapers increased the rate of accidents and decreased the rate of successful voids. Clinical implications of these results are discussed. Copyright © 2004 Society for the Experimental Analysis of Behavior, Inc.


This article describes personality in terms and concepts supplied by operant psychology. In other words, it is a “behavioralized” description of a psychological concept that has long been dominated by hypothetical constructs rather than abstractions drawn from direct observations. This article is a corrective for that tradition. Copyright © 2004 Kluwer Academic / Plenum Publishers.


Trichotillomania is described in the dermatological literature as the chronic pulling of one’s hair resulting in noticeable hair loss or alopecia. This chapter describes trichotillomania, its prevalence, causes, and treatments. Copyright © 2003 Kluwer Academic / Plenum Publishers.


Functional encopresis (FE) is a common, undertreated, and often overinterpreted form of fecal incontinence. When left untreated, FE is more likely than other forms of incontinence such as enuresis to lead to serious and potentially life-threatening medical sequelae and seriously impaired social acceptance, relations, and development. This chapter is a comprehensive, user-friendly description of encopresis and delayed toilet training. The chapter includes information on prevalence, causes and correlates, and a step-by-step guide for treatment. Copyright © 2003 John Wiley & Sons, Inc.


Sucking itself is an essential human activity that begins reflexively and continues because of the psychophysiological results it produces. Nonnutritional sucking (NNS), a virtually universal human activity in early life, occurs when children suck objects that are incapable of providing nutrition such as fingers, toes, portions of the caregiver’s body, or objects designed ad hoc, termed pacifiers in American culture and dummies in others. This chapter describes finger sucking, its associated side effects, and effective treatments. Copyright © 2003 Kluwer Academic / Plenum Publishers.

Nail biting (onychophagia) is the eponymous term for repetitive biting and/or chewing of the finger (and sometimes toe) nails. This chapter describes nail biting, its prevalence, causes and correlates, theoretical perspectives, and recommendations for treatment. Copyright © 2003 Kluwer Academic / Plenum Publishers.


Time-out is the most commonly used child disciplinary tactic in the United States. This chapter describes time-out, its research basis, how to use it, and some ideas about what to use it for. Copyright © 2003 John Wiley & Sons, Inc.


Stereotypic movement disorder (SMD) is a diagnostic classification of motor behavior that is repetitive, often seemingly driven, has no apparent purpose, markedly interferes with normal activities, can result in self-inflicted bodily harm and is not better accounted for by a compulsion, a tic, a stereotypy that is part of a Pervasive Developmental Disorder, or hair pulling. This chapter describes stereotypic movement disorder, its frequency, clinical correlates, and treatments. Copyright © 2003 Kluwer Academic / Plenum Publishers.


Breath-holding spells are common in healthy, otherwise normal infants and young children, have a dramatic presentation, and are often terrifying for parents to observe. This chapter describes breath-holding spells in terms of prevalence, causes and correlates, and treatments. Copyright © 2003 Kluwer Academic / Plenum Publishers.


This chapter describes one of the most effective treatments ever devised for habit disorders called habit reversal. It also describes some of its successful applications. Habit reversal is a multicomponent treatment procedure for repetitive behavior problems. Copyright © 2003 Kluwer Academic / Plenum Publishers.


The American Psychiatric Association defines tics as sudden, rapid, recurrent, nonrhythmic, stereotyped motor movements or vocalizations. This chapter describes mild and chronic tic disorders, their frequency and causes, and some of their treatments. Copyright © 2003 Kluwer Academic / Plenum Publishers.


The authors evaluated the effects of response prevention, a treatment previously shown to be effective for routine thumb sucking and suggested to be effective for early onset trichotillomania, applied to hair pulling in a 2-year-old. Response prevention was used alone in two settings (bedtime and naptime) and...
combined with a brief time-out in another (daytime). The authors also used a novel assessment, weight of hairs pulled, and the results indicated complete cessation of hair pulling. These results add to a growing literature suggesting early onset hair pulling may be more appropriately classified as a benign habit than as trichotillomania. Copyright © 2002 SAGE Publications, Inc.


This chapter discusses two predominant forms of oral-digital habits, thumb/finger sucking and nail biting in terms of their demographics, phenomenology, causes, functions, and clinical associations. Copyright © 2001 Kluwer Academic Publishers.


Repetitive behavior disorders (RBD) such as tic disorders, trichotillomania, and a variety of other problematic habitual behaviors can produce a number of detrimental physical and social effects. In this chapter, we review a representative sample of harmful sequela from these disorders. Not all clients will suffer from, or be at risk for all negative effects discussed in this chapter, but clinicians should be aware of the potential for the presentation or development of multiple untoward effects of RBDs, and multiple representative examples will be described. Copyright © 2001 Kluwer Academic Publishers.


This study examined the effect of tic-related talk on the vocal and motor tics of two boys with Tourette’s syndrome. Using ABAB withdrawal designs, the boys were alternately exposed to conditions with and without talk of their tics. For both boys, vocal tics markedly increased when talk pertained to tics and decreased when talk did not pertain to tics, but motor tic covariance was less consistent. Copyright © 2001 The Society for the Experimental Analysis of Behavior, Inc.


Objective: To evaluate a novel intervention for bed-time problems. Design: We used an ABAB withdrawal-type experimental design. Setting: The intervention was prescribed in an outpatient primary health care context and evaluated in the home setting. Participants: Two normally developing boys aged three and ten years were the primary participants. Twenty parents and 23 practicing pediatricians rated the acceptability of the intervention. Intervention: A bedtime pass, exchangeable for one excused departure from bedroom after bedtime. Main Outcome Measures: For both primary participants, instances of crying and/or coming out from the bedroom after bedtime; for the 20 parents and 23 pediatricians, comparative ratings of acceptability for the pass and two other commonly used approaches to bedtime problems (ignoring crying and letting children sleep with their parents). Results: Crying and coming out from the bedroom reduced to zero rates in both children. Pediatricians rated using the pass as significantly more acceptable than letting children sleep with parents and equivalent to ignoring. Parents rated the pass as more acceptable than either alternative. Conclusion: The bedtime pass provides pediatricians with a readily usable, potentially effective, and highly acceptable novel intervention for bedtime problems, one of the most common complaints in outpatient pediatrics. Copyright © 1999 American Medical Association.
Behavioral Theory and Interventions


This chapter discusses enuresis and encopresis, the two most commonly occurring elimination disorders in children. The authors review the large bodies of literature on nocturnal enuresis, diurnal enuresis, and functional encopresis. The reviews cover definition, prevalence, etiology, clinical course, and treatment. Sample treatment plans are provided. Copyright © 1998 Plenum Press.


Objective: To determine if primary nocturnal enuresis (PNE) is accompanied by significant behavioral comorbidity. Design: A survey design using a standardized behavioral rating scale. Settings: Behavioral pediatric clinics in the Midwest. Participants: Subjects with PNE (n=92) were selected from 122 consecutive referrals for enuresis. Criteria included age 5 years or older, PNE status, and wetting frequency of at least once per week. The clinical sample without PNE (N=92) was randomly selected from 429 consecutive referrals to the same pediatric clinics, stratified for age and sex. The nonclinical sample (n=92) was randomly selected by strata from the standardization sample (N=614) of the behavioral checklist used in the study. Main Outcome Measure: The Eyberg Child Behavior Inventory (ECBI), a standardized parent report scale, was used to measure the degree of behavioral comorbidity. The ECBI yields 2 scores, Problem Intensity and Problem Number. Results: Results from 2 separate 3 (group) x 2 (sex) analyses of variance indicated a significant main effect for group on Problem Intensity and Problem Number (P<.001). For Problem Intensity, post hoc comparisons indicated the mean of the PNE sample was significantly higher than the mean of the nonclinical sample (P<.05), but the main scores of the clinical sample were significantly higher than those of both the PNE and nonclinical samples (P<.05). For Problem Number, post hoc comparisons revealed the means of the PNE and nonclinical samples did not differ from each other (P>.05) but were lower than the mean of the clinical sample (P<.05). Conclusion: Primary nocturnal enuresis does not present with significant behavioral comorbidity in most cases. The results suggest that, with the exception of an extraordinary clinical presentation, pediatricians should treat PNE as a common biobehavioral problem without a psychiatric component. Copyright © 1998 American Medical Association.


Historically, anxiety has been a dominant subject in mainstream psychology but an incidental or even insignificant one in behavior analysis. We discuss several reasons for this discrepancy. We follow with a behavior-analytic conceptualization of anxiety that could just as easily be applied to emotion in general. Its primary points are (a) that language-able humans have an extraordinary capacity to derive relations between events and that it is a simple matter to show that neutral stimuli can acquire discriminative functions indirectly with no direct training; (b) that private events can readily acquire discriminative functions; (c) that anxiety disorders seem to occur with little apparent direct learning or that the amount of direct learning is extraordinarily out of proportion with the amount of responding; and (d) that the primary function of anxious behavior is experiential avoidance. We conclude that the most interesting aspect of anxiety disorders may occur as a function of derived rather than direct relations between public events and overt and private responses with avoidance functions. Implicit in this conclusion and explicit in the paper is the assertion that anxiety is a suitable subject for behavior-analytic study. Copyright © 1998 The Society for the Experimental Analysis of Behavior, Inc.


We evaluated the effectiveness of an abbreviated habit reversal procedure to reduce maladaptive oral self-biting in an adolescent boy in residential care. Treatment involved a combination of relaxation and two competing responses. Results of a withdrawal design and two posttreatment medical evaluations
indicated that the intervention eliminated the biting and the tissue damage it caused. Copyright © 1997
The Society for the Experimental Analysis of Behavior, Inc.

Friman, P. C. (1995). Nocturnal enuresis in the child. In R. Ferber & M. Kryger (Eds.), Principles and

Nocturnal enuresis is one of the most prevalent and persistent sleep problems in children. Despite
extensive clinical research, many enuretic children in the United States remain untreated, mistreated, or
treated ineffectively. For example, recent surveys suggest many parents use punishment and/or fluid
restriction to treat their children’s enuresis, while many primary-care physicians only recommend drug
treatment or no treatment at all. Effective skill-based alternatives are available, but they are described
infrequently in medical journal and/or medical texts. This chapter briefly discusses enuresis in terms of
diagnosis, incidence, etiology, and bladder physiology, and then more thoroughly discusses drug
treatments, their limitations, and skill-based treatment alternatives. Copyright © 1995 W.B. Saunders
Company.


Early basic research showed that increases in required response effort (or force) produced effects that
resembled those produced by punishment. A recent study by Alling and Poling determined some subtle
differences between the two behavior-change strategies, but also confirmed that increasing required effort
is an effective response-reduction procedure with enduring effects. In this paper we summarize basic
research on response effort and explore the role of effort in diverse applied areas including deceleration of
aberrant behavior, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, oral habits, health care appointment keeping,
littering, indexes of functional disability, and problem solving. We conclude that renewed interest in
response effort as an independent variable is justified because of its potent effects and because the
political constraints imposed on punishment- and reinforcement-based procedures have yet to be
imposed on procedures that entail manipulations of response effort. Copyright © 1995 The Society for the
Experimental Analysis of Behavior, Inc.


Studied the relationship between chronic thumb-sucking and behavior problems reflective of
psychopathology. Compared scores on the Child Behavior Checklist (CBCL) and Eyberg Child Behavior
Inventory (ECBI) for matched samples of thumb-sucking, referred, and nonreferred children. Mean
scores for the thumb-sucking and nonreferred samples were equivalent and were significantly lower than
scores for the referred sample. Comparing scores for older children (8 - 14 yrs) and younger children (4 - 7
yrs) did not produce a significant interaction. Correlating measures of thumb-sucking severity with ECBI
and CBCL scores produced only 8 (of 42) significant correlations and a mean correlation of only .09.
Results provide little support for the theoretically derived notion that thumb-sucking is necessarily a
Other Research
Research Methodology

Boys Town utilizes a variety of scientific approaches to refine and evaluate programs and services. These approaches include the development and testing of assessment instruments, employing advanced statistical techniques for data analysis, and using best practices in outcome evaluations. For example, Boys Town has developed or revised instruments to help direct-care staff improve the quality of care they provide to youth and families, measure the restrictiveness of a child’s living environment, and assess suicide risk in children. Additionally, Boys Town has conducted a series of studies examining the Diagnostic Interview Schedule for Children, a clinical assessment tool designed to assist in the diagnosis of disorders. The articles in this section demonstrate Boys Town's commitment to using scientific methods in assessment, treatment, and evaluation of services for youth and families.

In Press


The Alabama Parenting Questionnaire nine-item short form (APQ-9) is an often used assessment of parenting in research and applied settings. It uses parent and youth ratings for three scales: Positive Parenting, Inconsistent Discipline, and Poor Supervision. The purpose of this study is to examine the longitudinal invariance of the APQ-9 for both parents and youth, and the multigroup invariance between parents and youth during the transition from middle school to high school. Parent and youth longitudinal configural, metric, and scalar invariance for the APQ-9 were supported when tested separately. However, the multigroup invariance tests indicated that scalar invariance was not achieved between parent and youth ratings. Essentially, parent and youth mean scores for Positive Parenting, Inconsistent Discipline, and Poor Supervision can be independently compared across the transition from middle school to high school. However, comparing parent and youth scores across the APQ-9 scales may not be meaningful. Copyright © 2015 SAGE.


In this study the 15-item Evidence-Based Practices Attitude Scale (EBPAS), a measure designed to assess attitudes towards the adoption of EBPs, was collected from administrators of residential care facilities for youth in the United States. As the EBPAS was administered to a different sample for which it was originally developed (i.e., community mental health), we conducted a Confirmatory Factor Analysis to investigate if its factor structure was maintained. Results confirm the factor structure of the EBPAS as a valid measure of attitude towards evidence-based practice among youth residential care providers. Limitations and areas of future research are discussed. Copyright © 2016 Hogrefe Publishing.

Published


Family-centered program research has demonstrated its effectiveness in improving adolescent outcomes. However, given current fiscal constraints faced by governmental agencies, a recent report from the Institute of Medicine and National Research Council highlighted the need for cost-benefit analyses to inform decision making by policymakers. Furthermore, performance management tools such as balanced scorecards and dashboards do not generally include cost-benefit analyses. In this paper, we describe the development of an Excel-based decision support tool that can be used to evaluate a selected family-based program for at-risk children and adolescents relative to a comparison program or the status quo. This tool
incorporates the use of an efficient, user-friendly interface with results provided in concise tabular and graphical formats that may be interpreted without need for substantial training in economic evaluation. To illustrate, we present an application of this tool to evaluate use of Boys Town’s In-Home Family Services (IHFS) relative to detention and out-of-home placement in New York City. Use of the decision support tool can help mitigate the need for programs to contract experts in economic evaluation, especially when there are financial or time constraints. Copyright © 2015 Elsevier Ltd.

**Published**


Youth in residential care have significant mental health needs, which require regular progress monitoring; however, very few emotional or behavioral assessments have been examined with this unique, high-risk population. This study examined the psychometrics of the Symptoms and Functioning Severity Scale (SFSS), a brief 24-item measure designed to assess the emotional and behavioral status of youth. This study examined the SFSS ratings from 143 youth with a disruptive behavior diagnosis living in a group-home facility in the Midwest and 52 of their service providers. Overall, the findings suggest that the psychometrics of the SFSS, when rated by staff or youth, were similar to the original outpatient clinical samples. More specifically, the Rasch analyses indicate that the SFSS items and the overall scale are performing adequately, and the confirmatory factor analyses replicated the two-factor structure for staff. However, the fit of the two-factor model was less compelling for youth ratings. In all, the brief SFSS seems a promising measure for assessing problem severity for youth in residential care. Copyright © 2014 Hammill Institute on Disabilities and SAGE.


Strength-based assessment has been identified as an appropriate approach to use in planning treatment and evaluating outcomes of youth in residential settings. In previous research, the Behavioral and Emotional Rating Scale-2, a standardized and norm-referenced strength-based measure, has demonstrated adequate reliability and validity with youth served in community and educational settings. The purpose of the present study was to examine the internal reliability and convergent validity of the BERS-2 by comparing the test to the Child Behavior Checklist and the Symptoms and Functioning Severity Scale. The results indicate that the scores from the BERS-2 are internally consistent and converge with other behavioral and emotional measures which, taken together, suggest that the BERS-2 could be acceptable for assessing the emotional and behavioral strengths of youth in residential settings. Study limitations and future research directions are identified. Copyright © 2014 Springer.


There is a need for brief progress monitoring measures of behavioral and emotional symptoms for youth in out-of-home care. The Symptoms and Functioning Severity Scale (SFSS; Bickman et al. in Manual of the peabody treatment progress battery. Vanderbilt University, Nashville, 2010) is one measure that has clinician and youth short forms (SFSS-SFs); however, the psychometric soundness of the SFSS-SFs with youth in out-of-home care has yet to be examined. The objective was to determine if the psychometric characteristics of the clinician and youth SFSS-SFs are viable for use in out-of-home care programs. The participants included 143 youth receiving residential treatment and 52 direct care residential staff. The current study assessed internal consistency and alternate forms reliability for SFSS-SFs for youth in a residential care setting. Further, a binary classification test was completed to determine if the SFSS-SFs similarly classified youth as the SFSS full version for low- and elevated-severity. The internal consistency for the clinician and youth SFSS-SFs was adequate ($\alpha = .75-.82$) as was the parallel forms reliability.
(r = .85–.97). The sensitivity (0.80–0.95), specificity (0.88–0.97), and overall accuracy (0.89–0.93) for differentiating low and elevated symptom severity was acceptable. The clinician and youth SFSS-SFs have acceptable psychometrics and may be beneficial for progress monitoring; however, more research is needed to assess their sensitivity to change over time in out-of-home programs. Copyright © 2014 Springer.


Tests that measure the emotional and behavioral problems of children and youth are typically not normed and standardized on youth diagnosed with disruptive behavior, particularly those youth in residential care. Yet professional standards mandate that before instruments are used with a specific population the psychometric properties need to be studied and re-established: specifically, psychometric properties, including validity, need to be evaluated (AERA, APA, and NCME, The standards for educational and psychological testing. AERA, Washington, DC, 1999). The purpose of the present study was to assess the validity characteristics of the Symptoms and Functioning Severity Scale (SFSS; Bickman et al., Manual of the Peabody Treatment Progress Battery, Vanderbilt University, Nashville, TN, 2010), a widely used test developed for use in outpatient clinics, with youth in a residential care program. The convergent validity of the SFSS was established with the large correlations (0.78–0.86) with the CBCL. Several binary classification analyses including specificity, area under the receiver operating characteristic curve, positive and negative likelihood ratios, and the Youden Index supported the validity of the SFSS. However, the sensitivity index was somewhat low indicating the test may produce a high level of false negatives. Limitations, future research and implications are discussed. Copyright © 2014 Springer.


This chapter examines latent growth curve modeling (LGM) as a flexible tool for testing the effects of drug use and delinquency preventive interventions. The chapter reviews basic LGM and describes extensions of the model, such as parallel process and two-part LGMs, that can be used to examine nuanced research questions of interest to prevention science (e.g., mediation). Caveats are noted, and the chapter concludes by encouraging drug use and delinquency prevention researchers to increase their use of LGM to test theory-driven hypotheses about intervention effects. It is our hope that this chapter, which is conceptual and illustrative in nature, will help expand the ways in which researchers examine hypothesized processes of change relevant to the fields of drug use and also delinquency prevention. We begin the chapter with a general overview of basic LGM, including unconditional and conditional latent growth curve models. Next, we illustrate how basic LGM can be used to test randomized preventive interventions. Then, we discuss extensions of LGM that can be used to examine specific questions about hypothesized program effects. We address LGM for testing hypothesized intervention-induced mediating processes and discuss two-part models for examining differential prevention effects on the multiple dimensions of complex, time-varying outcome variables. Recent advancements in models for testing preventive intervention effects across latent or unobserved trajectory groups also are reviewed briefly, as are developments in so-called shared-parameters models, which combine LGM with other longitudinal data analytic techniques, such as survival analysis. Concluding the chapter are some cautionary notes and a discussion of future research directions. Copyright © 2015 American Psychological Association.


Pediatric psychologists are often interested in finding patterns in heterogeneous longitudinal data. Latent variable mixture modeling is an emerging statistical approach that models such heterogeneity by classifying individuals into unobserved groupings (latent classes) with similar (more homogenous) patterns. The purpose of the second of a 2-article set is to offer a nontechnical introduction to longitudinal latent variable mixture modeling. Three latent variable approaches to modeling longitudinal data are
reviewed and distinguished. Step-by-step pediatric psychology examples of latent growth curve modeling, latent class growth analysis, and growth mixture modeling are provided using the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study–Kindergarten Class of 1998–1999 data file. Latent variable mixture modeling is a technique that is useful to pediatric psychologists who wish to find groupings of individuals who share similar longitudinal data patterns to determine the extent to which these patterns may relate to variables of interest. Copyright © 2014 The Author.


Pediatric psychologists are often interested in finding patterns in heterogeneous cross-sectional data. Latent variable mixture modeling is an emerging person-centered statistical approach that models heterogeneity by classifying individuals into unobserved groupings (latent classes) with similar (more homogenous) patterns. The purpose of this article is to offer a nontechnical introduction to cross-sectional mixture modeling. An overview of latent variable mixture modeling is provided and 2 cross-sectional examples are reviewed and distinguished. Step-by-step pediatric psychology examples of latent class and latent profile analyses are provided using the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study–Kindergarten Class of 1998–1999 data file. Latent variable mixture modeling is a technique that is useful to pediatric psychologists who wish to find groupings of individuals who share similar data patterns to determine the extent to which these patterns may relate to variables of interest. Copyright © 2014 The Author. Published by Oxford University Press on behalf of the Society for Pediatric Psychology.


New prevention approaches require innovative research designs to maximize our ability to obtain answers to research questions. This chapter provides an overview of new research designs that address both effectiveness and implementation research in prevention. It also includes a discussion of what we have called adaptive or hybrid designs that integrate the concepts of effectiveness and implementation into an ongoing trial. These adaptive designs have the flexibility to adapt to changes in research questions and yet maintain the rigor associated with randomized control trials. We illustrate these approaches with examples from recent studies and point the way toward the design of future trials for prevention. Copyright © 2015 Springer.


There are many measures that assess parenting skills or practices, such as behavior, beliefs, coping mechanisms, reactions to stress, or discipline. However, little is known about the psychometric quality of these parenting measures. This information is essential for practitioners and researchers to aide in the selection of the most valid and reliable measures to assess parenting behavior or attitudes. This study examined the psychometric quality among parenting measures published from 1985 to 2009. After the initial search 164 measures were identified, but were reduced to 25 measures that supplied some degree of psychometric information, were published in the United States or Canada, and were in English. Measures were compared across numerous categories including respondent type, norming data, administration type, and ten psychometric variables such as internal consistency, content validity, and predictive validity. Out of the 25 measures, seven had no acceptable psychometric properties, seven had only 1–2 acceptable ratings on psychometric properties, six had between 3 and 4 acceptable psychometric ratings, none had between 5 and 6 acceptable ratings, and only five had strong psychometric properties in seven or more of the 10 categories. Likewise, only five measures provided and norming information and 14 measures provided scoring procedures. Implications, limitations, and recommendations for future research are discussed. Copyright © 2014 Springer.

Many students who exhibit behavioral and emotional problems during adolescence often show less severe problems in school in early grades. Screening for these early indicators can help educational professionals direct support to students who are more likely to benefit from increased support. The screening protocol needs to be psychometrically sound, accurate in identifying students at risk, and resource efficient. The present study explored the psychometric properties of a brief behavioral screener—the 10-item Emotional and Behavioral Screener (EBS)—for a sample of 65109 first-grade students assessed as part of a universal screening process. Confirmatory factor analysis and Rasch measurement techniques were used in conjunction to evaluate the factorial validity, item quality, rating scale functioning, and measurement invariance across gender of the EBS. Results indicated that the EBS has largely strong psychometric properties, with a few notable exceptions: potential multidimensionality, significant differential item functioning across gender, and only moderate differentiation between rating-scale categories (i.e., response options). Limitations and directions for research to clarify some remaining questions about this screening procedure are also discussed. Copyright © 2014 Council for Exceptional Children.


Therapeutic alliance has been frequently studied in individual counseling sessions; however, research on therapeutic alliance in residential settings for youth with mental health diagnoses has been limited. This may be due, in part, to the presence of multiple service providers often in caregiving roles. The purpose of this study was to examine the psychometric quality of a widely utilized measure of therapeutic alliance used in psychotherapy with youth in residential care where the treatment is provided by a trained married couple. We also compared the relationship between youth ratings of their male and female service providers, as well as examined correlations in ratings between youth and staff on therapeutic alliance. Finally, we investigated the direction, magnitude, and trajectory of change in therapeutic alliance over a 12-month period following admission into residential care. The method was a longitudinal assessment of 135 youth and 124 staff regarding therapeutic alliance over the course of 12months or discharge from services. Results indicated strong psychometric properties and high correlations for youth ratings of both their male and female service providers. However, the correlation was low between youth and service provider ratings of alliance. Longitudinal analyses indicated that rates of therapeutic alliance changed over time. Copyright © 2013 Elsevier Ltd.


The Pediatric Quality of Life assessment (PedsQL™) is the most widely used measure for assessing adolescent health-related quality of life (HRQoL). While youth in residential treatment facilities face many physical and mental health, behavioral, education, and familial challenges that could impact their HRQoL, no research has sought to assess the factor structure of the PedsQL™ among youth receiving residential care. High school-aged youth (N = 229) attending a large residential treatment center in Omaha, NE were recruited to complete a data collection packet comprised of various health assessments including the PedsQL. Four competing confirmatory factor analysis models were used to test the hypothesized internal structure of the PedsQL™ 4.0 Teen Report. Models A, B, and C had acceptable CFI (≥.90), TLI (≥.90), and RMSEA (≤.08) fit indicators. However, factor loadings for items 5 and 6 were problematic. After removing the two problematic items, Model D was fit to the data and proved to be the superior of the four models. This model included two first-order factors (physical health problems; school attendance problems) and one second-order factor (psychological health problems). The findings suggest that researchers and practitioners studying youth in residential settings can reliably use the PedsQL™ to assess their HRQoL. Copyright © 2013 Springer.

Background. A client’s motivation to receive services is significantly related to seeking services, remaining in services, and improved outcomes. The Motivation for Youth Treatment Scale (MYTS) is one of the few brief measures used to assess motivation for mental health treatment. Objective. To investigate if the psychometric properties of the MYTS previously found for youth receiving outpatient treatment would be replicated in a sample of youth entering residential care. Methods. The study was conducted at a large residential group care agency in the Midwest with 145 youth who completed the 8-item MYTS upon intake into the group homes. To investigate the psychometrics of the MYTS, we used classical test theory, Rasch modeling, and confirmatory factor analysis approaches. Results. Most of the psychometric properties were strong and replicated previous research in outpatient settings. The primary divergent finding was that the two subscales, problem recognition and treatment readiness were not significantly correlated in the residential sample, in contrast to the moderate correlations found in outpatient samples. Conclusions. The MYTS can be recommended for use in residential settings, however, researchers and practitioners should carefully examine the sub-scale scores. Future research needs to replicate these findings in residential settings and further explore why the two subscales are minimally correlated. Copyright © 2013 Springer.


Human sexuality, sexual development, and remediation of problematic sexual behaviors are equally accessible to small-n methods. We will provide readers with an introduction to the use of small-n methods, and will include examples and consideration for normative and problematic sexualized behavior of children and adolescents, though we have included some examples of adult populations because of the paucity of existing research with children and adolescents. Although we are ardent supporters of small-n designs ourselves, we acknowledge that they are not a panacea. Copyright © 2013 Academic Press.


Quality assessment of children's functioning is critical for both research and service delivery. The Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) is a brief, publicly-available instrument that provides such assessment. Although the SDQ has strong psychometric properties, less is known about its responsiveness or sensitivity to detecting change over time. This study examined the responsiveness of the SDQ among high-risk youth and tested the degree to which changes on the SDQ correspond to changes on the Child Behavior Checklist (CBCL), a well-established and lengthier reference measure. Longitudinal SDQ and CBCL data collected as part of routine service delivery were analyzed for 65 youth entering a large residential treatment program. Assessments were obtained both at intake and approximately 3 months into the program. Paired samples t-tests revealed statistically significant decreases in SDQ Conduct Problems and Emotional Symptoms scores, and McNemar’s tests showed a statistically significant decrease in the proportion of Conduct Problems cases. Correlations between changes on the SDQ scales and changes on corresponding CBCL scales ranged from .58 to .83. Results from receiver operating characteristic curves indicated that the SDQ was relatively accurate in identifying changes in CBCL diagnostic cases, with overlap across corresponding problem behavior domains ranging from 68 to 81%. Findings suggest that the SDQ may represent a shorter, low cost alternative to longer measures, such as the CBCL, for use when researchers and practitioners are faced with time or financial constraints associated with the assessment of child functioning over time. Copyright © 2012 Springer.
Suicide among young people is a serious global health problem. However, there are few well developed measures available to screen children under the age of fourteen for suicide risk. This chapter describes the development of the Child Suicide Risk Assessment (CSRA), which was developed to assess a wide range of suicide indicators (e.g., ideations, plans, and attempts) and predictors such suicidal tendencies among children aged 6 to 13 entering mental health services. The CSRA consists of 18 items and has demonstrated adequate internal consistency ($\alpha = .69$) for a multi-dimensional scale (3 factors: worsening depression, lack of support, and death as escape). CSRA scores correlated significantly with criterion measures of prior suicide attempts and ideations. Finally, an ROC curve discriminated significantly between prior attempters and non-attempters and was used to select preliminary CSRA cut-off scores for identifying substantial suicide risk. The CSRA is one of the first screening measures of suicide risk in pre-adolescents validated by associations with suicide attempts as well as ideations. Copyright © 2012 Nova Science Publishers, Inc.

The Bracken Basic Concept Scale: Expressive version is an extension and expressive equivalent of the classic Bracken Basic Concept Scale (now referred to as the Bracken Basic Concept Scale, Third Edition: Receptive). With this latest revision the author has successfully created a parallel version to the BBCS-3: Receptive. The review outlines the foundation and psychometrics of the instrument and provides caution in using the instrument to diagnose/identify language impaired children. Copyright © 2010 University of Nebraska Press.

The Clinical Evaluation of Language Fundamentals – Screening Test (CELF-4 Screening) is an individually administered brief language assessment designed to quickly and efficiently identify children who may require additional, more extensive language assessment. The review provides a brief overview of the uses, standardization sample, and psychometrics of the instrument while also providing commentary on its general utility in clinical practice. The CELF-4 Screening assessment clearly succeeds as a brief, valid device aimed at identifying children in need of extensive expressive and receptive language assessment. Authors of the assessment selected powerful items and domains that are quite sensitive when predicting possible impairment. Inclusion of sentence repetition and comprehension of instructions are two examples of historically powerful “acid tests” of language impairment. Potential users would clearly find benefit from adding this very brief measure in larger batteries of cognitive assessment as a device to lend support for later language assessment or ruling out the potential of language impairment when explaining/interpreting results. Copyright © 2010 University of Nebraska Press.

The Restrictiveness of Living Environment Scale has long been the primary way to conceptualize the “restrictiveness” of a child’s living situation. However, changes in systems of care and other factors have created a need to revisit how restrictiveness is conceptualized and measured. A measure was created to assess an environment’s level of restrictiveness and form the basis for empirically created general environment types. The measure was refined using expert review, cognitive interviewing, and pilot testing. Over 1,000 child organizations and older youth were invited to participate, with responses completed for 446 youth. The sample was reduced to 313 because of a large response from one setting. Cluster analysis produced a four-cluster solution suggesting low, moderate, elevated, and high
restrictiveness for a simplified general environment typology. The data also suggest overlap among clusters and that settings with the same names can vary. Limitations are described, and plans for how the measure will be further developed are outlined. Copyright © 2009 Hammill Institute on Disabilities and SAGE.


Research on bullying has focused on understanding it through investigating prevalence, risk factors, and behavioral correlates. Recently the focus has shifted a bit to include identification of effective prevention and intervention strategies. To determine which programs will be effective, the accurate assessment of involvement in bullying is required. The purpose of this study is to examine involvement in bullying, within five bully/victim involvement categories, to determine which of these categories of involvement is correlated with school behavior and emotional problems, and are there significant differences between students falling into these categories. Copyright © 2009 Routledge.


This study describes the development of the Staff Implementation Observation Form, an instrument to assess staff competence delivering an intervention to youth in group-home care with behavioral or emotional disorders. This instrument assesses staff skill at implementing the key treatment components, including building relationships with youth, teaching skills to youth, implementing a token economy, and establishing a youth self-government system. The pilot study, observing 92 staff members, found that the instrument possesses promising psychometric qualities, including adequate inter-rater agreement, internal scale consistency, and predictive validity. A cluster analysis identified groups of staff that had low, average, and high implementation. The instrument allows administrators to examine item-level implementation of residential staff to identify specific training needs within each subscale. Copyright © 2008 Haworth Press.


The Restrictiveness of Living Environment Scale (ROLES) has served for many years as the primary way of conceptualizing the “restrictiveness” of a child’s living situations, but due to limitations with the scale, a revision of the ROLES was undertaken. Several content-expert panels provided feedback on the ROLES revision conceptual framework and strategy, as well as the Restrictiveness Evaluation Measure (REM-Y), which is a 26-item survey which measures movement, activity, social interaction, and treatment/care restrictions. The REM-Y instructions were modified and several additional items were added. The next phase of the project will be a pilot study of the revised REM-Y and a preliminary analysis of the data. Copyright © 2007 The de la Parte Institute.


Clinician diagnoses of conduct disorder (CD) were compared to the diagnoses of CD generated by a structured interview against an observed criterion. Participants were 534 youth from a large residential program in the Midwest for delinquent youth. Rates of in-program CD behaviors were gathered from staff
observations of the youth over a nine-month period. Youth diagnosed with CD by the Diagnostic Interview Schedule for Children (DISC) displayed significantly more CD behaviors in the first six months of treatment compared to both youth without an externalizing disorder and youth diagnosed with CD by a clinician. Youth diagnosed with CD by a clinician had rates of CD identical to youth with an externalizing disorder. Clinicians may have weighted contextual information more heavily, as this group was significantly more likely to have an arrest record. Results support the use of structured interviews and provide evidence that typical clinician diagnoses may lack adequate validity. Copyright © 2004 Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.


This study documents the initial reliability and validity of the Child Suicide Risk Assessment (CSRA) for children under the age of 13. The revised CSRA retained 18 of 20 original items based on item-specific psychometric data from 140 pre-adolescents in out-of-home treatment programs. The CSRA demonstrated adequate internal consistency ($\alpha = .69$) for a multi-dimensional scale (three factors: worsening depression, lack of support, and death as escape). CSRA scores correlated significantly with criterion measures of prior suicide attempts and ideations. A receiver operating characteristic (ROC) curve discriminated significantly between prior attempters and non-attempters and was used to select preliminary CSRA cut-off scores for identifying substantial suicide risk. The CSRA is the first screening measure of suicide risk in pre-adolescents validated by associations with suicide attempts, as well as ideations. Copyright © 2004 Taylor & Francis Inc.


Selection bias can be the most important threat to internal validity in intervention research, but is often insufficiently recognized and controlled. The bias is illustrated in research on parental interventions (punishment, homework assistance); medical interventions (hospitalization); and psychological interventions for suicide risk, sex offending, and juvenile delinquency. The intervention selection bias is most adequately controlled in randomized studies or strong quasi-experimental designs, although recent statistical innovations can enhance weaker designs. The most important points are to increase awareness of the intervention selection bias and to systematically evaluate plausible alternative explanations of data before making causal conclusions. Copyright © 2004 American Psychological Association.


The purpose of this study was to assess the concurrent criterion validity of the attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) portion of the National Institute of Mental Health Diagnostic Interview Schedule for Children-IV (NIMHDISC-IV). Fifty-seven adolescent participants were divided into three groups on the basis of whether participants met criteria for ADHD on caretaker and adolescent responses on the DISC: (a) 18 participants for whom both the caretakers and adolescent endorsed ADHD, (b) 17 participants for whom the caretakers, but not the youth endorsed ADHD, and (c) a clinical control group with no ADHD diagnosis ($n = 22$). These three groups were compared across parent, teacher, and adolescent checklists; clinician diagnosis; and three objective measures of behavior (continuous performance task, actigraphy monitoring, and a structured observation). Findings lend partial support to the concurrent criterion validity of the ADHD section of the DISC. Copyright © 2004 SAGE Publications, Inc.

Objective: To derive and test a series of brief diagnosis-specific scales to identify subjects who are high probability of meeting diagnostic criteria and those who may safely be spared more extensive diagnostic inquiry. Method: Secondary data analysis of a large epidemiological data set ($n = 1,286$) produced a series of gate and contingent items for each diagnosis. Findings were replicated in a second retrospective analysis from a residential care sample ($n = 884$). The DISC Predictive Scales (DPS) were then used prospectively as a self-report questionnaire in two studies, in which parent ($n = 128$) and/or adolescents ($n = 208$) had subsequent diagnostic interviewing with the Diagnostic Interview Schedule for Children or the Schedule for Affective Disorders and Schizophrenia for School-Age Children. Results: All analyses showed that gate item selection was valid and that any missed cases were due solely to inconsistent reports on the same questions. Screening performance of the full scales was shown to be good, and substantial reductions in scale length were not associated with significant changes in discriminatory power. Conclusions: The DPS can accurately determine subjects who can safely be spared further diagnostic injury in any diagnostic area. This has the potential to speed up structured diagnostic intervening considerably. The full DPS can be used to screen accurately for cases of specific DSM-III-R disorders. Copyright © 2001 Lippincott Williams & Wilkins.


We administered the Diagnostic Interview Schedule for Children (DISC) two times to a group of youth (222 boys, 147 girls) entering residential care, once at their time of entry and once one year later. We then compared their DISC outcomes on conduct disorder (CD) and oppositional defiant disorder (ODD) against changes in independent direct observations of diagnostically relevant behavior obtained over the course of that year. Results from Hierarchical Linear Modeling analyses showed significant discriminative relationships between results from the DISC and the independent observations. Specifically, observations of symptomatic behaviors (CD or ODD) decreased for youth who met diagnostic criteria at the first administration of the DISC but not at the second, increased for youth who did not meet criteria at the first administration but did at the second, and did not change for youth who met criteria at both administrations. These results extend the data on the validity of the DISC and support continued research efforts to determine its clinical utility. Copyright © 2000 Plenum Publishing Corporation.


The National Association of Homes and Services for Children (NAHSC) surveyed member agencies on quality assurance and evaluation activities. Daly discusses the results of the survey and addresses the need that agencies have for additional knowledge or technical assistance in the various quality assurance and/or evaluation areas. Copyright © 1996 The Alliance for Children and Families.


Outcomes measurement of any child and family services program is the cornerstone of good practice, regardless of any political and funding pressures to conduct it. This article gives ten practical suggestions for initiating and sustaining the process of outcomes evaluation along with a list of possible measurement tools. Copyright © 1996 The Alliance for Children and Families.

Unfortunately, research has had too little to do with mental health and social service practices. Daly discusses why this happens and what we need to do to successfully meet the needs of the children and families who enter care and treatment today. Copyright © 1996 The Alliance for Children and Families.


Objective: To determine the predictive validity of the Suicide Probability Scale (SPS). Method: Prospective design, predicting subsequent suicide attempts, suicide verbalizations, and minor self-destructive behaviors from SPS scores at admission to a group home in a sample of 855 adolescents. Results: SPS scores significantly predicted all three suicide-relevant measures. Only 48% of subsequent attempts could have been predicted from SPS criteria that would have put 21% of newly admitted adolescents in the at-risk group. Although the prediction is far from perfect, it can prevent some suicide attempts when combined with effective suicide precautions. Conclusions: This is the first known evidence of predictive validity of any measure of suicide risk in adolescents. Its predictive ability may have been reduced by interventions designed to reduce suicide risk. Despite the large number of false-positives and modest predictive validity, a large body of literature indicates that quantitative predictions perform better than clinical judgments in predicting psychological outcomes. However, the SPS measures only a subset of factors predictive of suicide, including suicidal ideation, hopelessness, and social isolation. Risk factors not assessed by the SPS include previous suicide attempts, conduct disorder, substance abuse, and reasons for living. These additional risk factors may be important to improve upon the predictive validity of the SPS. Copyright © 1996 American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry.


Longitudinal research design with many waves of data have the potential to provide a fine-grained description of program impact, so they should be of special value for evaluation research. This potential has been illusive because our principal analysis methods are poorly suited to the task. We present strategies for analyzing these designs using Hierarchical Linear Modeling (HLM). The basic growth curve model found in most longitudinal applications of HLM are not well suited to program evaluation, so we developed more appropriate alternatives. Our approach defines well-focused parameters that yield meaningful effect-size estimates and significance tests, efficiently combining all waves of data available for each subject. These methods do not require a uniform set of observations from all respondents. The Boys Town Follow-Up Study, an exceptionally rich but complex data set, is used to illustrate our approach. Copyright © 1995 SAGE Publications, Inc.


Many youth placed in out-of-home care have serious anger and aggression problems. These youth create much administrative and staff frustration. This frustration can cause program administrators to look to new treatment modalities whether inside or outside of their specific milieu for the therapeutic solutions to these problems. This randomized control group study provides an example of the importance of experimental program evaluation when an applied setting begins a drift towards the use of new treatment modalities. The results showed that both treatment and control groups improved over time but that there were no differences between groups in the daily number of angry incidents, the number of youth negatively terminated from the program, or self-report of state-trait anger expression. The results also suggest that without this research the noneffective intervention would have continued to be funded and given causative status for the observed improvements in referred youth behavior into the foreseeable future. Moreover, the development of these types of superstitious beliefs may lead child-care organizations to spend scarce dollars on expensive treatments that do not increase the efficacy of the treatment as usual. Thus, this study shows that there are potential economic and treatment efficacy
reasons for the use of experimental program evaluation when new treatments are implemented. Copyright © 1993 John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.


This article challenges the “myths” that systematic outcome research conducted by child-care agencies is not effective, too complex, and expensive. In so doing, it provides a general strategy for initiating research at such agencies. Copyright © 1992 The Alliance for Children and Families.

Daly, D. L. (1992). **Program reviews: The minimum level of research that every agency needs.** *Caring, 8*, 12-13.

Regular program reviews are essential for any child-care agency in order to ensure quality care and to identify and address problems. This article presents and explains crucial areas that should be covered in such reviews. Copyright © 1992 The Alliance for Children and Families.


Research and evaluation are vital to the future of child care and treatment. The benefits of such work (identifying costly ineffective treatment, uncovering potentially harmful treatment, and discovering factors that limit research and evaluation) are presented and discussed in this article. Copyright © 1992 The Alliance for Children and Families.
Other Research
Education of At-Risk Youth

Many at-risk youth struggle with academic skill deficits in addition to behavioral problems. The articles in this section investigate the characteristics of youth at risk for academic failure and/or behavioral disorders and the effectiveness of various interventions provided in educational settings. Assessment and identification of these at-risk youth is essential to providing targeted interventions to improve academic and behavioral functioning.

In Press


High school dropout has been associated with negative outcomes, including increased rates of unemployment, incarceration, and mortality. Dropout rates vary significantly depending on individual and environmental factors. The purpose of our study was to use an ecological perspective to concurrently explore student- and school-level predictors associated with dropout for the purpose of better understanding how to prevent it. We used the Education Longitudinal Study of 2002 dataset. Participants included 14,106 sophomores across 684 public and private schools. We identified variables of interest based on previous research on dropout and implemented hierarchical generalized linear modeling. In the final model, significant student-level predictors included academic achievement, retention, sex, family socioeconomic status (SES), and extracurricular involvement. Significant school-level predictors included school SES and school size. Race/ethnicity, special education status, born in the United States, English as first language, school urbanicity, and school region did not significantly predict dropout after controlling for the aforementioned predictors. Implications for prevention and intervention efforts within a multitiered intervention model are discussed. Copyright © 2015 American Psychological Association.

Published


Less structured school settings such as lunchrooms and playgrounds occasion more frequent instances of peer victimization than structured classroom settings (Fite et al., 2013; Vaillancourt et al., 2010) but, also provide students with the opportunity for social exchanges that can further their social development (Boulton, 1999; Low et al., 2010). We hypothesized that lunchroom-specific peer acceptance would predict children’s level of peer victimization even when controlling for classroom-based social preference scores. Peers completed measures of acceptance, and children, teachers, and peers completed measures assessing peer victimization. As expected, lunchroom-specific peer acceptance differed significantly for rejected versus preferred/average children and for victims versus non-victims. Results also revealed that lunchroom-specific acceptance predicted concurrent levels of peer victimization when controlling for class-wide social preference scores. Findings suggest that children’s acceptance by lunch mates is a potentially important parameter to consider when assessing or intervening with children who experience difficulties with peer relationships. Copyright © 2015 Elsevier Ltd.


This chapter provides a brief review of the practice and theory of school-based crisis intervention. To support the implementation of these activities, this chapter provides a framework for conceptualizing the elements of school crisis intervention, reviews specific school crisis interventions, and discusses relevant research. It concludes with an overview of the school crisis intervention process and provides a case illustration. Copyright © 2013 Oxford University Press.

Children are immersed in technology, from television to the Internet, and increasingly, education curricula have embraced the powerful potential of integrating technology to facilitate student learning and success. However, to date, researchers and practitioners have not fully considered the potential for technology to help counselors access and enhance their empirically supported counseling services in schools. This article aims to fill this gap by initiating a discussion about the key considerations, merits, and limitations of using email with counseling services in schools. Beginning with a brief literature review, recent research describing the scope and potential benefits of telemental health is discussed. Specific legal and ethical considerations are outlined, as well as recommendations for counselors to consider when implementing this tool in counseling. This article also presents a case study to illustrate the key considerations in using email when counseling a student. Finally, future directions related to use of technology with counseling at school are explored. Copyright © 2013 Springer.


Youth involved in residential care programs present with significant difficulties across behavioral and mental health domains. Although this is a group that is also at considerable risk for academic failure, very little research has been done to understand the academic functioning of this population. The current study sought to expand what is known about this population and examine factors that are predictive of their levels of academic functioning. Results from 208 youth indicated that at the time of entry into residential care youth were performing in low average ranges across academic areas. While several variables were identified as predictors for level of academic functioning (e.g., IQ, age at admission, race/ethnicity, special education identification, and gender), variables particularly relevant for youth in residential care programs (e.g., behavior, number of previous schools attended) did not serve as predictors. Implications for practice and future research are discussed. Copyright © 2010 National Dropout Prevention Center/Network.


Purpose. Undiagnosed language impairment for youth in residential care is a concern as similar populations have shown elevated levels of language delays. Therefore, the purposes of this study were: (1) to identify the percent of youth in residential care at risk for language impairment (LI) and (2) to compare the demographic, academic achievement, and functional academic skills of youth with or without possible LI. Method. Participants were 80 youth in residential care. Risk for LI was determined using the Clinical Evaluation of Language Fundamentals Screening Test (Semel, Wiig, & Secord, 2004). Independent samples t-tests (t) and chi-square (x2) analyses were conducted to assess the differences between groups. Measures used include: the Woodcock Johnson Test of Achievement (Woodcock, McGrew, & Mather, 2001) and the Kaufman Functional Academic Skills Test (Kaufman & Kaufman, 1994). Results. Over half of this sample (54%) was identified as at-risk for LI. Statistically significant differences between youth with and without LI were found on academic variables. Specifically, youth at risk for LI presented academic achievement and functional academic scores in the low to low-average ranges. Conclusion. Findings suggest there is a need to screen youth who enter residential programs for possible LI. Implications for treatment and program planning are discussed. Copyright © 2010 American Speech-Language-Hearing Association.

Definitions bullying and discusses the prevalence, impact, and development of bullying. Copyright © 2010 Springer.


Students with attention and behavior problems oftentimes experience difficulty finishing academic work. On-task behavior is frequently cited as a primary reason for students’ failure to complete homework assignments. Researchers have identified self-monitoring and self-management of on-task behavior as effective tools for improving homework completion rates among students who experience difficulty attending to tasks. The purpose of this study was to examine the effectiveness of a 30-min naturalistic, home-based, self-management intervention for students with attention problems and behavioral disorders. Specifically, the current study set out to investigate differences in on-task behavior between baseline and intervention when self-monitoring intervals were set at 3 and 10 min. For all participants, on-task behavior improved significantly over baseline. Furthermore, the improvements in on-task behavior were evident for both the 3- and 10-min intervals, suggesting that shorter intervals did not enhance the intervention’s effectiveness. Finally, based on school records, the frequency of completed homework assignments increased. Copyright © 2009 National Association of School Psychologists.


While estimates suggest that 10% to 31% of children in residential care are identified as with a disability, little is known about their characteristics or functioning as compared to nondisabled peers. This study evaluated data of 123 children with \( n = 34 \) and without \( n = 89 \) disabilities in residential care to determine demographic, behavioral, mental health, and educational characteristics. Data included demographic, behavior checklist, and standardized mental health and academic measures. Results indicated that both groups presented elevated risks; however, scores for children with disabilities revealed even greater levels of need. Primary risks were found on indicators of behaviors (e.g., social functioning), mental illness (e.g., anxiety), and academic performance (e.g., general knowledge and reading). Implications, limitations, and recommendations for future research are discussed. Copyright © 2009 Child Welfare League of America.


This chapter provides an overview of Insulin-Dependent Diabetes Mellitus management and symptoms as they commonly manifest themselves in school-age children. The chapter details the short- and long-term cognitive effects associated with successful and unsuccessful management of the disease, especially as it relates to educational challenges they face in the classroom. The chapter highlights the unique verbal-memory difficulties often present in this population through a case study approach utilizing neuropsychological assessment data. Copyright © 2008 Springer Publishing Company.


This review examines interventions intended to improve the literacy functioning of adolescent students with emotional and/or behavior disorders. Seventeen studies met inclusion criteria and included a variety of interventions designed to affect a variety of literacy areas, including spelling, writing, and reading fluency. Findings from these studies indicate that, overall, several different intervention types produced increases across areas of literacy functioning. However, both participant and setting characteristics were
poorly described and were not representative of the population with emotional and/or behavioral disorders. The lack of research on interventions to increase adolescent literacy limits the generalizability of the results to a broader population. Considerations for practice implications and future research are discussed. Copyright © 2008 Council for Children with Behavioral Disorders.


This literature review examined the status of the published research on the academic and school functioning behaviors of students in out-of-home care. Twenty-nine studies were identified and evaluated to assess the (a) characteristics of the children and youth studied, (b) academic and school functioning areas evaluated, (c) reports of overall academic performance, and (d) quality of the reported research. Results suggest that overall, children in out in out-of-home care demonstrate several academic risks across placement settings and academic areas. However, despite an increase in attention to the academic functioning of this population, significant limitations in the published literature exist. For example, incomplete reporting of student information, inadequate research on specific academic skill sets, and limited numbers of studies reporting school functioning behavior narrow our understanding of the specific academic strengths and limitations of this population, and further hinder our abilities to develop targeted intervention programs. Study limitations, implications, and recommendations for future research are discussed. Copyright © 2008 Elsevier Ltd.


Children with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) are at risk for academic failure. Although studies have evaluated the effects of medication on academic outcomes, the literature on non-medication interventions has not received equal attention. This review examined 41 studies that evaluated the impact of non-medication interventions on the academic functioning of students with ADHD. The findings revealed that a broad range of traditional and nontraditional interventions has been used to improve students’ academic outcomes, yet systematic lines of research were clearly missing. Moreover, important demographic and descriptive information, such as participant characteristics and classroom settings, were often poorly defined and generally did not reflect the current population of students with ADHD. Despite some indications of promise, significant limitations in the literature allow for few conclusions about intervention effects and generalization. Further systematic research is needed to determine which academic intervention methods hold the most promise for children and youth with ADHD. Copyright © 2007 SAGE Publications, Inc.


As prevention and early intervention opportunities for young children at risk of emotional disturbance (ED) increase, questions regarding the effectiveness of these programs for specific subpopulations of children have emerged. To date, few investigators have examined young children entering early school prevention/intervention programs to determine if clear subpopulations can be identified, and if so, which characteristics are most distinguishing. This study examined the risk factors of 740 kindergarten and first-grade students, identified by teachers as at risk of ED, to determine if distinct profiles exist. Cluster analysis procedures using teacher, child, and parent reports of family, academic, and social/emotional data revealed five distinct clusters: Parent nominated (n = 24), Elevated risks (n = 43), Primarily behavior (n = 25), Primarily academic (n = 27), and False positives (n = 21). Validation techniques revealed that the five clusters were distinguished by clear profiles, which differed across level of severity (i.e., high or low levels of risk per domain) and primary focus of risk (i.e., academic, social/emotional, or familial). Similarities and differences across cluster groups, possible implications for targeted prevention or early intervention programs, study limitations, and directions for future research are presented. Copyright © 2006 The Council for Children with Behavioral Disorders.
Special education legislation has placed an increased emphasis on early intervention programs for children at risk for early literacy delays and behavioral disorders. Given this trend, it is important to understand the characteristics of students identified and served in at-risk programs. This study presents the findings from a cluster analysis on the early literacy and behavioral characteristics of 193 children screened at risk for behavioral disorders served in an early intervention program. Clustered variables included behavioral measures from the Early Screening Project (ESP; Walker, Severson, & Feil, 1995), Systematic Screening for Behavior Disorders (SSBD; Walker & Severson, 1992), and measures of early reading development from the Woodcock Reading Mastery Tests—Revised (WRMT-R; Woodcock, 1998). Split-half procedures and external criteria were used to validate results. Five distinct subgroups were revealed: Broad Risks, Academic Achievers, Primarily Behavior, Primarily Academic, and Extreme Behaviors. Results indicate heterogeneous characteristics and clear areas of behavioral and early reading risk between subgroups within the greater sample. Implications, limitations, and future research are discussed. Copyright © 2006 Hammill Institute on Disabilities and SAGE.


This chapter provides a comprehensive review of the current literature base on the academic status and interventions for children and youth identified with emotional and behavioral disorders. Results of the review suggest that these children present educational deficits across academic subject areas, with deficits increasing as children progress from elementary to middle and high school. Academic interventions studied for these children include a broad range of teacher, child, and peer-mediated interventions. However, limitations in the research limit conclusive recommendations for best practice in the remediation of academic deficits in children and youth with emotional and behavioral disorders. Copyright © 2005 PRO-ED, Inc.


Current recommendations for the treatment of attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) call for a multimodal approach including a combination of medication, behavior modification, school accommodations, and ancillary services. One method that has been proposed as an effective and efficient means for increasing students' attention and academic productivity is self-regulation. This article reports the results of a meta-analysis of the literature on the use of four self-regulation interventions (self-monitoring, self-monitoring plus reinforcement, self-management, and self-reinforcement) for children with ADHD. Combined effect sizes for these four treatments were greater than 1.0 for on-task behavior, inappropriate behavior, and academic accuracy and productivity, indicating that self-regulation interventions are effective for children with ADHD. Copyright © 2005 The Council for Exceptional Children.


This study assessed the effects of positive peer reporting (PPR) on the cooperative behaviors and peer acceptance of three socially rejected, delinquent youths in residential care. PPR involved rewarding classroom peers with token points for publicly praising the social behavior of target students. A nonconcurrent multiple baseline was used to assess the effects of the procedure. Results indicated that PPR increased the use of cooperative statements made to peers. For all three students, PPR also led to increases in their peer status. Social validity measures indicated high treatment acceptability and a match between the amount of cooperative behavior emitted by participants and randomly selected classmates.
Findings support the use of peers as sources of reinforcement for a rejected youth's prosocial behavior. Copyright © 2000 American Psychological Association.
Other Research
Psychosocial Development and Risk

Behavioral and mental health problems are rooted in early developmental experiences and are shaped by multiple psychological and social influences. Effective prevention and early intervention efforts can interrupt the development of problem outcomes and promote positive youth development. The articles in this section examine longitudinal pathways leading toward behavioral and emotional problems, and identify risk and protective factors that either increase or decrease risk for problem outcomes over time. These studies provide essential knowledge for informing the development and refinement of interventions to prevent problem outcomes and promote positive functioning among youth.

In Press


Few adolescent smoking cessation programs have been able to match the success rate found in adult programs. The current study identified smoking cessation strategies used by adolescents and whether strategies differed as a function of ethnic, gender, or individual smoking level. Participants were 136 high school students who made an attempt to quit or reduce their smoking. Logistic regressions revealed that individuals making an actual quit attempt and African-American adolescents used cessation strategies presumed to be more effective. Adolescents are more likely to use informal cessation methods and may need to be provided with more information on effective quit strategies. Copyright © 2015 Taylor & Francis.


Children and adolescents exposed to multiple contextual risks are more likely to have academic difficulties and externalizing behavior problems than those who experience fewer risks. This study used data from the Northern Finland Birth Cohort 1986 (a population-based study; N = 6961; 51 % female) to investigate (a) the impact of cumulative contextual risk at birth on adolescents’ academic performance and misbehavior in school, (b) learning difficulties and/or externalizing behavior problems in childhood as intervening mechanisms in the association of cumulative contextual risk with functioning in adolescence, and (c) potential gender differences in the predictive associations of cumulative contextual risk at birth with functioning in childhood or adolescence. The results of the structural equation modeling analysis suggested that exposure to cumulative contextual risk at birth had negative associations with functioning 16 years later, and academic difficulties and externalizing behavior problems in childhood mediated some of the predictive relations. Gender, however, did not moderate any of the associations. Therefore, the findings of this study have implications for the prevention of learning and conduct problems in youth and future research on the impact of cumulative risk exposure. Copyright © 2016 Springer.


This study examined cross-national similarities in a developmental model linking early age of alcohol use onset to frequent drinking and heavy drinking and alcohol problems 1 and 2 years later in a binational sample of 13-year-old students from two states: Washington State, USA and Victoria, Australia (N = 1833). A range of individual, family, school, and peer influences was included in analyses to investigate their unique and shared contribution to development of early and more serious forms of alcohol use and harms from misuse. Data were collected annually over a 3-year period from ages 13 to 15.
Analyses were conducted using multiple-group structural equation modeling. For both states, early use of alcohol predicted frequent drinking, which predicted alcohol problems. Family protective influences had neither direct effects on heavy drinking nor effects on alcohol harm in either state, whereas school protection directly reduced the risk of heavy drinking in both states. Exposure to antisocial peers and siblings predicted a higher likelihood of heavy drinking and alcohol harm for students in both Washington and Victoria. Implications for the prevention of adolescent alcohol problems are discussed.


Factors that might exacerbate or mitigate the transmission of depressive symptoms from parents to adolescents and the continuity of depressive symptoms into early adulthood are poorly understood. This study tested the hypothesis that the intergenerational transmission and stability of depressive symptoms would be stronger for girls than boys over adolescence and into early adulthood, while considering the possibility that the pattern of gender moderation might vary depending on parent gender and developmental timing. The participants were 667 rural Midwestern adolescents (52 % female) and their parents. Survey data on maternal and paternal depressive symptoms (at youth age 11) and on adolescent and young adult depressive symptoms (at youth ages 11, 18, and 21) were analyzed via multiple group structural equation modeling. Maternal depressive symptoms predicted increased late adolescent depressive symptoms for girls but not boys, and adolescent depressive symptoms were more stable in girls. Paternal depressive symptoms predicted increased late adolescent depressive symptoms for all youth. The findings suggest the need for early, tailored interventions.


The social developmental processes by which child maltreatment increases risk for marijuana use are understudied. This study examined hypothesized parent and peer pathways linking preschool abuse and sexual abuse with adolescent and adult marijuana use. Analyses used data from the Lehigh Longitudinal Study. Measures included child abuse (physical abuse, emotional abuse, domestic violence, and neglect) in preschool, sexual abuse up to age 18, adolescent (average age = 18 years) parental attachment and peer marijuana approval/use, as well as adolescent and adult (average age = 36 years) marijuana use. Confirming elevated risk due to child maltreatment, path analysis showed that sexual abuse was positively related to adolescent marijuana use, whereas preschool abuse was positively related to adult marijuana use. In support of mediation, it was found that both forms of maltreatment were negatively related to parental attachment, which was negatively related, in turn, to having peers who use and approve of marijuana use. Peer marijuana approval/use was a strong positive predictor of adolescent marijuana use, which was a strong positive predictor, in turn, of adult marijuana use. Results support social developmental theories that hypothesize a sequence of events leading from child maltreatment experiences to lower levels of parental attachment and, in turn, higher levels of involvement with pro-marijuana peers and, ultimately, to both adolescent and adult marijuana use. This sequence of events suggests developmentally-timed intervention activities designed to prevent maltreatment as well as the initiation and progression of marijuana use among vulnerable individuals.


The changes in Washington State and Colorado marijuana laws call for the development of new brief family-focused adolescent marijuana use preventive interventions that are relevant for and tailored to the context of legalization for retail sale. To that end, focus groups with parents and teens were conducted to find out about their concerns and needs in the context of legalization. Six semi-structured focus groups (3
with parents, 3 with teens) were conducted in Washington State in 2013 related to consequences of teen marijuana use and messages that would be effective in helping to prevent teens from using marijuana in the context of legal adult use. A total of 33 teens and 35 parents participated. Three primary themes were common to these parents and teens: the negative consequences of marijuana use during adolescence on mental, physical, and social health; the need for more or better information; and the need for information/messages to come from trusted sources. The themes related to potential prevention messages include the use of fear; stories about real people; focusing on short-term consequences; and teens needing alternative activities (something better to do). The results suggest that parents and teens need information about the new retail marijuana legalization law. Teens are open to both information and guidance from parents as long as it is calm and respectful. Firsthand accounts of consequences of marijuana use from peers and adults, rather than threats from authority figures, could hold some promise for persuading teens to avoid marijuana use. Copyright © 2016 Informa Plc.

Published


A number of cross-sectional and a few longitudinal studies have shown a developmental relationship between child abuse and adult physical and mental health. Published findings also suggest that social support can lessen the risk of adverse outcomes for some abused children. However, few studies have investigated whether social support mediates or moderates the relationship between child abuse and adult physical and mental health. Structural equation modeling was used to examine data on these topics from a longitudinal study of more than 30 years. While a latent construct of physical and emotional child abuse did not predict adult health outcomes directly, child abuse did predict outcomes indirectly through social support. A test of variable moderation for child abuse and social support was nonsignificant. Results suggest that social support may help explain the association between child abuse and health outcomes at midlife. Implications of the findings for prevention and treatment are discussed. Copyright © 2015 American Psychological Association.


This study examined whether children’s perceptions of maternal nonsupportive reactions to sadness (active discouragement and non-response) influenced children’s loneliness and classroom popularity indirectly through their effects on children’s sadness inhibition and self-perception of social competence. Participants were children in grades 3–6 from a university affiliated public elementary school (N = 175; 53 % females; 37 % racial/ethnic minority). Children reported on the frequency of their mother’s active discouragement and non-response of their sadness, as well their own sadness inhibition, self-perceived social competence, and loneliness. Classroom peers reported on children’s popularity. Results indicated that perceived maternal non-response to sadness was indirectly related to classroom popularity and loneliness through the effect on children’s self-perception of social competence. In contrast, perceived maternal active discouragement of sadness was indirectly related to children’s classroom popularity through the effect on children’s sadness inhibition. These results support the consideration of active discouragement and non-response as distinct constructs and indicate the likelihood of different pathways of influence in predicting emotional and social outcomes such as loneliness and classroom popularity. Copyright © 2015 Springer.
Adolescent depressed mood is related to the development of subsequent mental health problems, and family problems have been linked to adolescent depression. Longitudinal research on adolescent depressed mood is needed to establish the unique impact of family problems independent of other potential drivers. This study tested the extent to which family conflict exacerbates depressed mood during adolescence, independent of changes in depressed mood over time, academic performance, bullying victimization, negative cognitive style, and gender. Students (13 years old) participated in a three-wave bi-national study (n = 961 from the State of Washington, United States, n = 981 from Victoria, Australia; 98% retention, 51% female in each sample). The model was cross-lagged and controlled for the autocorrelation of depressed mood, negative cognitive style, academic failure, and bullying victimization. Family conflict partially predicted changes in depressed mood independent of changes in depressed mood over time and the other controls. There was also evidence that family conflict and adolescent depressed mood are reciprocally related over time. The findings were closely replicated across the two samples. The study identifies potential points of intervention to interrupt the progression of depressed mood in early to middle adolescence. Copyright © 2016 Springer.

In this chapter we review the evidence base for youth problematic marijuana use prevention strategies. In subsequent sections, we briefly describe the legal and historical changes and basic scientific advancements that provide the backdrop for current marijuana use prevention research and practice. Next, we review evidence-based programs in the school, family, and community domains that have demonstrated, within the context of rigorous trials, significant effects on marijuana-related outcomes among youth. Drawing from themes across multiple studies, we outline some lessons learned to date and note areas where further research is needed to more fully realize the potential to effectively prevent problematic marijuana use. Finally; we conclude with policy and practice recommendations. Copyright © 2015 American Psychiatric Publishing, Inc.

A growing number of states have new legislation extending prior legalization of medical marijuana by allowing non-medical marijuana use for adults. The potential influence of this change in legislation on adolescent marijuana and other substance use (e.g., spillover or substitution effects) is uncertain. We capitalize on an ongoing study to explore the prevalence of marijuana and other substance use in two cohorts of adolescents who experienced the non-medical marijuana law change in Washington State at different ages. Participants were 8th graders enrolled in targeted Tacoma, Washington public schools and recruited in two consecutive annual cohorts. The analysis sample was 238 students who completed a baseline survey in the 8th grade and a follow-up survey after the 9th grade. Between the two assessments, the second cohort experienced the Washington State non-medical marijuana law change, whereas the first cohort did not. Self-report survey data on lifetime and past month marijuana, cigarette, and alcohol use were collected. Multivariate multilevel modeling showed that cohort differences in the likelihood of marijuana use were significantly different from those for cigarette and alcohol use at follow-up (adjusting for baseline substance initiation). Marijuana use was higher for the second cohort than the first cohort, but this difference was not statistically significant. Rates of cigarette and alcohol use were slightly lower in the second cohort than in the first cohort. This exploratory study found that marijuana use was more prevalent among teens shortly after the transition from medical marijuana legalization only to medical and non-medical marijuana legalization, although the difference between cohorts was not statistically significant. The findings also provided some evidence of substitution effects. The analytic technique used...
here may be useful for examining potential long-term effects of non-medical marijuana laws on adolescent marijuana use and substitution or spillover effects in future studies. Copyright © 2015 Taylor & Francis.


Research indicates that risk factors cluster in the most vulnerable youth, increasing their susceptibility for adverse developmental outcomes. However, most studies of cumulative risk are cross-sectional or short-term longitudinal, and have been based on data from the United States or the United Kingdom. Using data from the Northern Finland Birth Cohort 1986 Study (NFBC1986), we examined cumulative contextual risk (CCR) at birth as a predictor of adolescent substance use and co-occurring conduct problems and risky sex to determine the degree to which CCR predicts specific outcomes over-and-above its effect on general problem behavior, while testing for moderation of associations by gender. Analyses of survey data from 6963 participants of the NFBC1986 followed from the prenatal/birth period into adolescence were conducted using structural equation modeling. CCR had long-term positive associations with first-order substance use, conduct problems, and risky sex factors, and, in a separate analysis, with a second-order general problem behavior factor. Further analyses showed that there was a positive specific effect of CCR on risky sex, over-and-above general problem behavior, for girls only. This study, conducted within the Finnish context, showed that CCR at birth had long-term general and specific predictive associations with substance use and co-occurring problem behaviors in adolescence; effects on risky sex were stronger for girls. Results are consistent with the hypothesis that early exposure to CCR can have lasting adverse consequences, suggesting the need for early identification and intervention efforts for vulnerable children. Copyright © 2016 Elsevier Ltd.


Depression symptoms are associated with impairments in functioning and have substantial health and economic consequences. Universal substance misuse prevention programs have shown effects on non-targeted mental health-related symptoms, but long-term effects are understudied. This cluster randomized controlled trial examined effects of both the LifeSkills Training (LST) and Strengthening Families Program: For Parents and Youth 10–14 (SFP 10–14) interventions, delivered during seventh grade, on age 22 young adult depression symptoms. The study was conducted in US rural Midwestern communities with a randomly-selected sample from a larger study (N = 670). Experimental conditions were LST+SFP 10–14, LST-only, and a control condition. Effects on age 22 depression symptoms were hypothesized as mediated through effects on age 21 relationship problems and illicit use of substances. Structural equation modeling with manifest and latent variables was conducted to test hypotheses; the intervention conditions were combined and compared with the control condition because analyses indicated a comparable pattern of effects between intervention conditions. Significant indirect intervention effects were found on age 22 depression symptoms via effects on the mediating variables (indirect effect: $\beta = -0.06, 95\% CI [-0.10, -0.01], p = 0.011$). Effect sizes for the young adult variables were between $d = 0.17$ and 0.29, which can be considered small, but nontrivial, especially in the context of public health benefits. Results support scaled-up implementation of school-based and family-focused universal substance misuse preventive interventions. Copyright © 2014 Springer Science+Business Media New York.
Emotion regulation difficulties and maladaptive behaviors: Examination of deliberate self-harm, disordered eating, and substance misuse in two samples. Cognitive Therapy and Research, 39, 140-152. doi: 10.1007/s10608-014-9655-3

Data from two studies were utilized to examine whether the co-occurrence of maladaptive behaviors thought to serve an emotion regulating function would be associated with greater emotion regulation difficulties compared to one or none of these behaviors. Study 1 included an undergraduate sample (N = 119; 76% female) and Study 2 included a sample of patients receiving treatment at a residential substance abuse treatment facility (N = 82; 48% female). Subgroups were created based on the presence or absence of the following maladaptive behaviors: (a) deliberate self-harm (DSH) and disordered eating (Study 1); and (b) DSH, disordered eating, and substance misuse (Study 2). Subgroup differences in mean levels of emotion regulation difficulties (overall and six dimensions) were evaluated for each study. In Study 1, individuals who reported clinically-relevant levels of both DSH and disordered eating had more difficulties with emotion regulation (overall and three dimensions) compared to those who reported neither behavior. In Study 2, individuals who reported clinically-relevant levels of both DSH and substance misuse had more difficulties with emotion regulation (Study 2; overall and five dimensions) compared to those with only substance misuse. Overall, the results of these studies support the hypothesis that the co-occurrence of clinically-relevant maladaptive behaviors is associated with greater difficulties regulating emotions than the presence of only one maladaptive behavior (or no maladaptive behaviors). These findings suggest that clinical interventions targeting emotion regulation skills may be particularly useful for individuals who display a pattern of co-occurring maladaptive behaviors. Copyright © 2014 Springer.


Research consistently indicates that exposure to early family adversity is associated with compromised development in early childhood. Consequently, researchers, direct service workers, and policy makers have sought to understand and alleviate the multidimensional stressors faced by families during the prenatal and early childhood periods. Person-centered approaches are one method of understanding the interplay of risk factors. The present review synthesizes current person-centered research investigating social and economic risk factors during the prenatal and early childhood periods, and summarizes how person-centered approaches have advanced the understanding of early family risk and later child adaptive functioning. Results are discussed in the context of the family during early childhood development, with a discussion of clinical and prevention-based implications. Copyright © 2015 Wiley.


Polydrug use is relatively common amongst adolescents. Psychological distress is associated with the use of specific drugs, and may be uniquely associated with polydrug use. The purpose was to test the association of psychological distress with polydrug use using a large adolescent sample. The sample consisted of 10,273 students aged 12-17 years of age from the State of Victoria, Australia. Participants completed frequency measures of tobacco, alcohol, cannabis, inhalant, and other drug use in the past thirty days, and psychological distress. Control variables included age, gender, family socioeconomic status, school suspensions, academic failure, cultural background, and peer drug use. Drug use classes were derived using latent class analysis, then the association of psychological distress and controls with drug use classes was modelled using multinomial ordinal regression. There were three distinct classes of drug use: no drug use (47.7%), mainly alcohol use (44.1%), and polydrug use (8.2%). Independent of all controls, psychological distress was higher in polydrug users and alcohol users, relative to nondrug users, and polydrug users reported more psychological distress than alcohol users. Psychological distress was most characteristic of polydrug users, and targeted prevention outcomes may be enhanced by a collateral focus on polydrug use and depression and/or anxiety. Copyright © 2014 American Psychological Association.
This article summarizes current theory and research related to apologies in close relationships. Eight studies examined predictors of the occurrence and effectiveness of apologies, and 7 studies investigated outcomes associated with apologies. Two studies investigated predictors and associated outcomes of apologies. Findings indicated that characteristics of the victim (e.g., willingness to empathize), characteristics of the transgressor (e.g., gender, personality), and specific contextual factors (e.g., relational closeness) influence the occurrence and effectiveness of an apology. Several factors, including the transgressor’s ability to adopt a self-focus or self-other focus when apologizing, were associated with positive relationship outcomes. The review highlights a lack of consensus in apology conceptualization and the need for additional research on the role of apologies in maintaining close relationships. Copyright © 2014 National Council on Family Relations.

In November 2012, Washington State and Colorado became the first states in the United States to legalize recreational marijuana use for adults, and Uruguay became the first country to allow the cultivation, distribution, possession, and use of marijuana. One possible consequence of these changes is increased adolescent marijuana use. Parents may mitigate this adverse consequence; however, whether parents and adolescents have accurate knowledge about the laws and are discussing marijuana use in light of the law changes is unknown. We examine perceptions, knowledge, and parent–child discussions about Washington State’s recreational marijuana law in a sample of low-income families. Participants were a subset of families (n = 115) in an ongoing study that originally recruited parents and adolescents from middle schools in Tacoma, Washington. In summer 2013, when students were entering the 11th grade, students and their parents were asked questions about the recreational marijuana law. Participants perceived that their marijuana-related attitudes and behaviors changed little as a result of the law, and displayed uncertainty about what is legal and illegal. Most parents reported discussing the new law with their children but only occasionally, and conversations emphasized household rules, particularly among parent lifetime marijuana users compared to non-users. Results suggest that there should be a public health campaign focused on families that provides clear information about the recreational marijuana laws. Copyright © 2014 Informa Plc.

There are strong reasons to assume that early onset of puberty accelerates coital debut among adolescent girls. Although many studies support this assumption, evidence regarding the putative causal processes is limited and inconclusive. In this research, longitudinal data from the 1986 Northern Finland Birth Cohort Study (N = 2,596) were used to address three theoretical explanations: (a) a direct effect premised on biological processes, (b) a mediated path based on social psychological processes, and (c) a spurious effect derived from the evolutionary theory of socialization. In support of the social psychological pathway, the negative association between age at menarche and coital status at age 15 was almost fully mediated by differential social exposure—an empirical construct measuring involvement in high-risk social contexts. Copyright © 2013 SAGE Publications.

Although a pathway from childhood behavioural disorders to criminal offending is well established, the aetiological processes remain poorly understood. Also, it is not clear if attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is predictive of crime in the absence of comorbid disruptive behaviour disorder (DBD). We examined two research questions: (1) Does ADHD have a unique effect on the risk of criminal offending, independently of DBD? (2) Is the effect of childhood behavioural disorders on criminal offending direct or mediated by adolescent processes related to school experience, substance misuse and peers? Structural equation modelling, with latent variables, was applied to longitudinally collected data on 4644 men from the 1986 Northern Finland Birth Cohort Study. Both ADHD and DBD separately predicted felony conviction risk. Most of these effects were mediated by adolescent alcohol use and low academic performance. The effect of DBD was stronger and included a direct pathway to criminal offending. Findings were more consistent with the life course mediation hypothesis of pathways into crime than the behavioural continuity path, in that the effects of each disorder category were mediated by heavy drinking and educational failure. Preventing these adolescent risk outcomes may be an effective approach to closing pathways to criminal behaviour amongst behaviourally disordered children. However, as there was some evidence of a direct pathway from DBD, effective treatments targeting this disorder are also expected to reduce criminal offending. Copyright © 2014 John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.


About 10 years ago, a special issue of the journal Prevention Science reviewed the “great progress” that had occurred in the subfield of family-focused preventive intervention research. The summary of almost two decades of effort highlighted how, in particular, the scientific community was well poised to seize an opportunity for larger scale implementation and greater public health impact (Spoth, Kavanagh, & Dishion, 2002). Over a decade later, the field has further progressed, and the opportunity for public health impact is even greater, although many challenges remain. In part, one of the articles (Spoth & Redmond, 2002) featured in the special issue reviewed the research to date on the Iowa Strengthening Families Program (subsequently revised and renamed the Strengthening Families Program: For Parents and Youth 10–14 [SFP 10-14]). In this chapter, we recapitulate and update this program of research. Most important, the chapter reflects the progress in the broader field of prevention science. It also illustrates critical opportunities that, when properly seized, could better achieve the public health impact through family-focused prevention. These opportunities are suggested by knowledge gaps addressed through the SFP 10-14 program of research. Copyright © 2015 American Psychological Association.


Children's ability to manage the expression of sadness is critical to their development and adjustment. Although parents have been the primary focus of research examining sadness socialization, many acknowledge the influence of other agents such as children's peers. The present research evaluated one type of emotion socialization—reactions to sadness—by two different socialization agents: mothers and best friends. The sample included 125 third-grade through fifth-grade children enrolled in classrooms for typically developing children who reported on their sadness management, their depressive symptoms, and their mother’s and best friend’s responses to their sadness. Results revealed that reactions to children’s sadness made unique contributions to children’s ability to manage sadness and were further related to children’s depressive symptoms. Mothers’ reactions appeared to be directly associated with children’s depressive symptoms, and best-friend reactions were indirectly associated with depressive symptoms through emotion management. These results highlight the value of examining multiple emotion socialization agents in children's lives. Copyright © 2015 Wayne State University Press.

We examined parent emotion dysregulation as part of a model of family emotion-related processes and adolescent psychopathology. Participants were 80 parent–adolescent dyads (mean age = 13.6; 79 % African-American and 17 % Caucasian) with diverse family composition and socioeconomic status. Parent and adolescent dyads self-reported on their emotion regulation difficulties and adolescents reported on their perceptions of parent invalidation (i.e., punishment and neglect) of emotions and their own internalizing and externalizing behaviors. Results showed that parents who reported higher levels of emotion dysregulation tended to invalidate their adolescent’s emotional expressions more often, which in turn related to higher levels of adolescent emotion dysregulation. Additionally, adolescent-reported emotion dysregulation mediated the relation between parent invalidation of emotions and adolescent internalizing and externalizing behaviors. Potential applied implications are discussed. Copyright © 2014 Springer.


A daily diary methodology was employed to gather teens’ perceptions of maternal responsiveness to daily stressful events and teens’ reactions to maternal responsiveness in a diverse sample (792 entries from 104 teens; 81% African American, mean age = 13.7 years). Additionally, parents and teens completed baseline reports of internalizing symptoms. Diary findings were congruent with prior studies employing self-report measures of global maternal responses to emotion (e.g., higher probability of Accepting reactions to supportive responses, higher probabilities of Attack, Avoid-Withdraw reactions to nonsupportive responses). Elevated baseline internalizing symptoms were related to perception of elevated Punish and Magnify responses during the week, and more Avoidant (Avoid-Withdraw and Avoid-Protect) reactions to responsiveness. Results are discussed in the context of reciprocal emotion socialization processes. Copyright © 2014 John Wiley & Sons, Ltd


Studies of adolescent alcohol use commonly rely on a small number of self-report survey items used to calculate a quantity-frequency index (QFI). This approach requires respondents to average across multiple drinking occasions, and is susceptible to error due to social desirability as well as inaccurate recall. Consumption estimates based on traditional self-report methods often fall short of estimates based on sales data, suggesting that self-report measures are prone to underreporting bias. The consequences of measurement error include inaccurate assessment of drinking levels and imprecision that can attenuate estimates of associations between alcohol consumption and its predictors or sequelae. In a relatively straightforward albeit novel approach to this problem, Roberts and colleagues have proposed what may be a useful tool for enhancing the accuracy of self-reports of alcohol consumption based on a brand-specific measure of drinking. Both pilot research and the current study, which compares the new measure with the standard QFI, show this to be a feasible and promising methodology. This work emerges from a growing body of research that extends the QFI by more fully contextualizing drinking episodes to facilitate accurate self-reports. Whereas methods for situting respondents’ drinking within particular time points and locations have been developed and used successfully, relatively little attention has been given to the issue of alcohol branding in self-report methodology. Copyright © 2014 Informa Plc.


This study investigated the consistency of discrepancy scores between adolescent and parent reports across several psychosocial constructs (adolescent internalizing, externalizing, emotion regulation
difficulties, parent rewarding responses to adolescent emotions, and parent depressive symptoms). Sixty-two adolescents (67.7% females; 76.7% African American) and one of their parents participated. Most of the associations among discrepancy scores were equivalent. There was one instance in which the association among two discrepancy scores (youth internalizing and externalizing) was stronger than the others and one instance in which the association was weaker than the others (youth internalizing and parent rewarding). These results suggest that discrepancies between adolescent and parent reports are not necessarily a stable characteristic of the dyad and depend on the construct under consideration. Copyright © 2014 IARR.


Conduct disorder and depression symptoms are well-established risk factors for substance use during adolescence. However, few investigations have examined whether early substance use increases adolescents’ risk of developing conduct disorder/depression symptoms. Using the Developmental Pathways Project sample of 521 middle school students (51.6% male), we tested whether substance use (indicated by alcohol and marijuana use, and use-related impairment) in 8th and 9th grade increased risk of conduct disorder and depression symptoms in 9th and 12th grade over and above prior symptoms. We examined whether associations between substance use and conduct disorder/depression symptoms were consistent across self- or parent-reported symptoms and whether associations were moderated by gender. Analyses indicated that, over and above prior symptoms, elevated substance use in 8th grade predicted elevated conduct disorder symptoms in 9th grade, and substance use in 9th grade predicted conduct disorder symptoms in 12th grade. In contrast, substance use failed to predict later depression symptoms independent of prior symptoms. These findings were consistent across self- and parent-reported conduct disorder/depression symptoms. With one exception (association between substance use in 8th grade and self-reported conduct disorder symptoms in 9th grade), relations between early substance use and later conduct disorder symptoms did not differ between boys and girls. Study findings underscore the unique contribution of substance use during early adolescence to the development of conduct disorder symptoms by late adolescence. Copyright © 2014 Rutgers University.


Most studies of adolescent substance use and psychological comorbidity have examined the contributions of conduct problems and depressive symptoms measured only at particular points-in-time. Yet, during adolescence, risk factors such as conduct problems and depression exist within a developmental context, and vary over time. Though internalizing and comorbid pathways to substance use have been theorized (Hussong et al. *Psychology of Addictive Behaviors* 25:390-404,2011), the degree to which developmental increases in depressive symptoms and conduct problems elevate risk for substance use impairment among adolescents, in either an additive or potentially a synergistic fashion, is unclear. Using a school-based sample of 521 adolescents, we tested additive and synergistic influences of changes in depressive symptoms and conduct problems from 6th to 9th grade using parallel process growth curve modeling with latent interactions in the prediction of late adolescent (12th grade) substance use impairment, while examining gender as a moderator. We found that the interaction between growth in depression and conduct disorder symptoms uniquely predicted later substance use problems, in addition to main effects of each, across boys and girls. Results indicated that adolescents whose parents reported increases in both depression and conduct disorder symptoms from 6th to 9th grade reported the most substance use-related impairment in 12th grade. The current study demonstrates that patterns of depression and conduct problems (e.g., growth vs. decreasing) are likely more important than the static levels at any particular point-in-time in relation to substance use risk. Copyright © 2013 Springer.

This study investigates patterns in violence over 3 time points in early to midadolescence in 2 statewide representative samples of youth, one in Washington State, USA and the other in Victoria, Australia. Comparable data collection methods in both states were used to cross-nationally compare patterns of violence, risk factors, and responses to violence (school suspensions and arrests) in 2 policy contexts. Risk factors include early use of alcohol, binge drinking, involvement with antisocial peers, family conflict, poor family management, sensation seeking, and bully victimization. These are modeled as correlates of initial violence and predictors of change in violence over a 3-year period, from ages 12 - 15, for participating youth. Results suggest that patterns and predictors of violence are mostly similar in the 2 states. Initial levels of violence (age 13) and change over time in violence were associated in both states with more youth school suspensions and more police arrests in Grade 9. Some cross-national differences were also shown. For example, correlations of violence with gender and violence with binge drinking were stronger in Victoria, whereas correlations of violence with early use of alcohol and with antisocial peer involvement were stronger in Washington State. Antisocial peer involvement and family conflict were significant predictors of a gradual increase in violence from Grades 7 - 9 for youth in Victoria only. Implications are discussed with attention to prevention and intervention efforts. Copyright © 2012 American Orthopsychiatric Association.


Exposure to adversity during childhood and adolescence predicts adjustment across development. Furthermore, adolescent adjustment problems persist into young adulthood. This study examined relations of contextual adversity with concurrent adolescent adjustment and prospective mental health and health outcomes in young adulthood. A longitudinal sample (N=808) was followed from age 10 through 27. Perceptions of neighborhood in childhood predicted depression, alcohol use disorders, and HIV risk in young adulthood. Further, the timing of adversity was important in determining the type of problem experienced in adulthood. Youth adjustment predicted adult outcomes, and in some cases mediated the relation between adversity and outcomes. These findings support the importance of adversity in predicting adjustment and elucidate factors that affect outcomes into young adulthood. Copyright © 2012 The Authors. Journal of Research on Adolescence © 2012 Society for Research on Adolescence.


AIMS: This study tests risk factors for four dimensions of alcohol use in the sequence from (i) early onset prior to age 13 to (ii) adolescent alcohol use and (iii) alcohol problems to (iv) young adult alcohol abuse. It also examines whether family-focused preventive interventions buffer predictive relationships. DESIGN: Data were from a randomized prevention trial extending from ages 11 to 21 years. SETTING: Families of sixth graders enrolled in 33 rural schools in the Midwestern United States were invited to participate. PARTICIPANTS: Families (n = 667) were pretested and assigned randomly to a control group (n = 208) or to family interventions (n = 459). The average age of participating youth was 11.3 years when the study began (52% female). MEASUREMENTS: Questionnaire data were collected on alcohol dimensions during adolescence (early onset, alcohol use, alcohol problems) and young adulthood (alcohol abuse), and on risk factors in early adolescence (male gender, impulsive behaviors, aggression-hostility, peer deviance and parent problem drinking). FINDINGS: Impulsive behaviors predicted early onset, peer deviance predicted alcohol use and parent problem drinking predicted alcohol problems (P < 0.05). Aggression-hostility and alcohol problems predicted alcohol abuse in the control group (P < 0.05), but not in the family interventions group (P > 0.05). CONCLUSIONS: Different dimensions of alcohol use and problems from before age 13 to young adulthood are predicted by different risk factors. Family-focused preventive
interventions can reduce the influence of some of these risk factors, including early adolescent aggression-hostility and late adolescent alcohol problems. © 2012 The Authors, Addiction © 2012 Society for the Study of Addiction.


Parental depression places offspring at elevated risk for multiple, co-occurring problems. The purpose of this study was to develop and preliminarily evaluate Project Hope, a family intervention for the prevention of both depression and substance use among adolescent-aged children (M = 13.9 years) of depressed parents. The program was created by blending two empirically supported interventions: one for depression and another for substance use. Thirty families were randomly assigned to either Project Hope (n=16) or a wait-list control condition (n=14). Pretests, posttests (n = 29), and 5-month follow-ups (n = 28) were conducted separately with parents and youth via phone interviews. Questions asked about the family depression experience, family interactions, family management, coping, adolescent substance use beliefs and refusal skills, adolescent depression, and adolescent substance use. Project Hope was fully developed, manualized, and implemented with a small sample of targeted families. Engagement in the program was relatively high. Preliminary outcome analyses were conducted using 2 (Group) X 3 (Time) analyses of covariance. Results provided some evidence for significant improvements among intervention compared to control participants in indicators of the family depression experience, family management, and coping, and a statistically significant decrease from pretest to posttest in alcohol quantity for intervention compared to control youth. Next steps for this program of research are discussed. Copyright © 2012 Springer.


Despite frequent theorizing, prior literature on the association between depressive symptoms and alcohol use in adolescence has been inconsistent. Yet studies have varied widely with respect to age of assessments, time frame of prediction, and controls for co-morbid conditions and demographic factors. The current study examined whether the associations between depressive symptoms and alcohol use were similar in valence and magnitude over a four year period in early adolescence, while accounting for conduct problems and exploring the covarying and moderating role of gender. A sample of 521 young adolescents and their parents were interviewed every year from 6th (mean age = 12.0) through 9th grade. At each interview, symptom counts on depressive and conduct disorders were generated from the Diagnostic Interview Schedule for Children. Adolescents also reported quantity and frequency of alcohol use. Autoregressive, cross-lagged panel models specifying depressive and conduct disorder symptoms as predictors of alcohol use one year later with equality constraints were tested and compared to models allowing path coefficients to vary over time. For youth self-report, depressive symptoms were positively associated with alcohol use one year later over and above conduct problems and earlier alcohol use throughout early adolescence. By parent report, only very early adolescent depressive symptoms (6th-7th grade) were associated with alcohol use. Gender did not moderate findings for analyses with self- or parent-report data. These results indicate that, even in the context of conduct disorder symptoms, depressive symptoms are important indicators of risk for use of alcohol across early adolescence. Copyright © 2013 Rutgers University.


Data from the 1986 Northern Finland Birth Cohort Study (n = 4,645) were used to examine the influence of mid-adolescent (age 15) school outcomes on late-adolescent (ages 17–19) risk of criminal conviction. Consistent with social-developmental theories of offending, we found that poor academic performance and reduced school attachment increase the risk of criminal conviction independently of pre-existing
differences in antisocial propensity and other confounding factors identified in prior research. Moreover, in support of an integrated model, our research suggests that academic performance and school attachment mediate the effects of childhood antisociality and learning difficulties on late-adolescent risk of criminal conviction. The implications of findings for policy and future research are discussed.


We investigated the influence of effective parenting behaviors (father and mother reports) and deviant peer association (adolescent reports) on subsequent young adolescent conduct problems (teacher reports) during grades 7–9, using structural equation modeling. Data were from a sample of 226 rural adolescents (n = 112 boys; n = 107 girls; n = 7 gender unknown), their parents, and teachers. Both effective parenting and association with deviant peers influenced later conduct problems; however, the pattern of influence varied across time and between fathers and mothers, with complex patterns of interactions between effective parenting and peer deviance. From seventh to eighth grade, effective parenting by both mothers and fathers buffered the effect of higher levels of peer deviance on conduct problems across adolescent gender. From eighth to ninth grade (i.e., transition into high school), fathers’ effective parenting buffered the effects of deviant peer association on their daughters’ conduct problems, whereas both fathers’ and mothers’ influence was stronger for sons when deviant peer associations were lower. Analyses also evaluated bidirectional longitudinal effects among adolescents, parents, and peers. Although varying by parent and adolescent gender or adolescent age, results generally supported the protective effects of parenting on their children’s conduct problems during early to mid adolescence. Copyright © 2012 Springer.


This study examined the mediated and moderated effects of a universal family-focused preventive intervention, delivered during young adolescence, on internalizing symptoms assessed in young adulthood. Sixth grade students (N=446; 52% female; 98% White) and their families from 22 rural Midwestern school districts were randomly assigned to the experimental conditions in 1993. Self-report questionnaires were administered at seven time points (pre-test to young adulthood—age 21) to those receiving the Iowa Strengthening Families Program (ISFP) and to the control group. Results showed that growth factors of adolescent internalizing symptoms (grades 6–12) were predicted by ISFP condition and risk status (defined as early substance initiation). Moderation of the condition effect by risk status was found, with higher-risk adolescents benefitting more from the ISFP. Results also supported the hypothesis that the ISFP’s effect on internalizing symptoms in young adulthood was mediated through growth factors of adolescents’ internalizing symptoms; risk moderation, however, was only marginally significant in young adulthood. The relative reduction rate on clinical or subclinical levels of young adult internalizing symptoms was 28%, indicating that for every 100 young adults displaying clinical or subclinical levels of internalizing symptoms from school districts not offering an intervention, there could be as few as 72 displaying those levels of symptoms in school districts that offered middle school prevention programming. These findings highlight how the positive effects of family-focused universal interventions can extend to non-targeted outcomes and the related potential public-health impact of scaling up these interventions. Copyright © 2012 Springer.


Purpose: To examine positive childhood experiences as predictors of positive adult functioning, including civic involvement, productivity and responsibility, interpersonal connection, and physical exercise; and to
examine adolescent substance use as a mediator of prosocial continuity. Methods: A total of 429 rural participants were interviewed across seven waves from age 11 to 22 years. Structural equation models examined the relationship between positive childhood experiences and adult functioning, with adolescent substance use added to each model as a possible mediating mechanism. Results: Positive childhood experiences predicted significantly better adult functioning for each model, even after accounting for adolescent substance use. Positive childhood experiences also consistently predicted significantly less adolescent substance use. In turn, adolescent substance use predicted significantly less civic involvement and less productivity and responsibility, but was not associated with interpersonal connection or physical exercise when accounting for childhood experiences. Results were largely consistent across gender and levels of family income. Conclusion: Findings show the enduring importance of positive childhood experiences in predicting positive functioning in early adulthood. Although adolescent substance use increased risk for poorer functioning in important domains of adult life, results suggest that positive experiences in late childhood continued to have a significant prosocial effect into young adulthood. The study also highlights the late elementary grades as a time when parents, teachers, and others can potentially have a large influence in proactively providing prosocial opportunities for children. Copyright © 2011 Society for Adolescent Health and Medicine.


Adolescent alcohol involvement is associated with numerous negative outcomes, but also appears to have positive correlates, including subjective well-being. Additional research is needed to understand these paradoxical findings. The current study examines alcohol use, adverse alcohol-related (and other substance-related) consequences, and subjective well-being in adolescence, and prediction to problem alcohol use in early adulthood. Participants in this longitudinal study, which extended from age 11 to age 21, were 208 rural teens (109 girls) and their families. Covariates included early substance use, early conduct problems, early depressed mood, gender, and parent educational attainment. Structural equation modeling showed that subjective well-being at age 16 positively predicted increased alcohol use at age 18. Alcohol use was not a significant predictor of subjective well-being; however, alcohol use at age 18 positively predicted alcohol problems at age 21, even while controlling for earlier adverse consequences and other predictors. Results help to further elucidate both the negative and positive correlates of underage drinking, and support the value of delaying alcohol initiation. Copyright © 2011 Springer Science+Business Media, LLC.


Thrill seeking is a robust positive predictor of adolescent substance use. Religiosity is negatively associated with substance use among teens, although findings are mixed. Few studies have examined the interplay between these two prominent risk and protective factors. The current study addresses this gap by examining the joint, interactive, and indirect influences of thrill seeking and each of two dimensions of religiosity, religious salience and religious attendance, in relation to adolescent substance use. Participants were 667 rural youths (345 girls and 322 boys) and their families participating in a longitudinal family-focused prevention trial. Data were collected via self-report surveys at six time points across 7 years, spanning ages 11 through 18. Results from latent growth curve analyses showed that both religious salience and religious attendance growth factors were associated negatively with late adolescent substance use, while adjusting for thrill seeking and selected covariates. Although the link between thrill seeking and substance use was not moderated by religiosity, there was a statistically significant indirect effect of thrill seeking on the outcome through a faster rate of downturn in religious attendance. Family intervention also predicted a slower rate of downturn in religious attendance and was associated negatively with substance use in late adolescence. Early adolescent substance use predicted a faster rate of decrease in religious salience throughout the teen years. The pattern of associations was similar for boys and girls. Findings suggest that teens who are elevated on thrill seeking could be targeted for specially-designed substance use prevention programs and provide additional evidence for the efficacy of family interventions. Copyright © 2011 American Psychological Association.

This paper examines whether there is cross-national similarity in the longitudinal relationship between early age alcohol use and adolescent alcohol problems. Potential mechanisms underlying this relationship also are examined, testing adolescent alcohol use, low self-regulation, and peer deviance as possible mediators. Students (N=1,945) participating in the International Youth Development Study, a longitudinal panel survey study, responded to questions on alcohol use and influencing factors, and were followed annually over a three-year period from 2002 to 2004 (98% retention rate). State-representative, community student samples were recruited in grade 7 in Washington State, United States (US, \(n = 961, 78\% \) of those eligible; \(M_{age} = 13.09, SD = .44\)) and Victoria, Australia (\(n = 984, 76\% \) of those eligible; \(M_{age} = 12.93, SD = .41\)). Analyses were conducted using multiple-group structural equation modeling. In both states, early-age alcohol use (age 13) had a small but statistically significant association with subsequent alcohol problems (age 15). Overall, there was little evidence for mediation of early alcohol effects. Low self-regulation prospectively predicted peer deviance, alcohol use, and alcohol problems in both states. Peer deviance was more positively related to alcohol use and low self-regulation among students in Victoria compared to students in Washington State. The small but persistent association of early age alcohol use with alcohol problems across both samples is consistent with efforts to delay alcohol initiation to help prevent problematic alcohol use. Self-regulation was an important influence, supporting the need to further investigate the developmental contribution of neurobehavioral disinhibition. Copyright © 2011 American Psychological Association.


This study examined a developmental, cascade model that includes childhood risks of conduct problems and family adversity at age 10–12; conduct problems, risk taking, and internalizing during adolescence; and adult outcomes of conduct problems, poor health, health risks, depression, and service use at ages 27 and 30. Analyses showed that childhood conduct problems predicted adolescent conduct problems and risk taking, which in turn, predicted adult conduct problems, health risks, depression, and service use. Childhood family adversity predicted adolescent internalizing, a predictor itself of poor health, depression, and service use at age 27. There was considerable continuity in the same adult outcomes measured over a 3-year period, as well as some cross-domain prediction from variables at age 27 to measures at age 30. Developmental patterns found in these data offer implications for future research and prevention. Copyright © 2010 Cambridge University Press.


Behavior and psychological problems assessed prospectively by teachers and parents and by youths’ self-reports through late childhood and adolescence were examined as possible predictors of early adult depression. Data were from 765 participants in the Seattle Social Development Project, a multiethnic and gender-balanced urban sample. Analyses examined 7 waves of data from ages 10 to 21, and included measures from the Achenbach Child Behavior Checklist and assessments of past-year depressive episode based on the Diagnostic Interview Schedule. Self-reported conduct problems as early as age 10 (Mason et al. 2001) and throughout adolescence consistently predicted depression at age 21. Parent reports of conduct and other externalizing problems in adolescence also significantly predicted adult depression. None of the available teacher reports through age 14 were significant predictors. Results suggest that externalizing problems can be useful indicators of risk for adult depression. Prevention efforts that target externalizing problems in youth may hold promise for reducing later depression. Copyright © 2010 Springer.

This study examines protective factors for young adult alcohol use disorders, depression, and comorbid alcohol use disorders and depression. Participants were recruited from all fifth-grade students attending 18 Seattle elementary schools. Of the 1,053 students eligible, 808 (77%) agreed to participate. Youths were surveyed when they were 10 years old in 1985 and followed to age 21 years in 1996 (95% retention). Protective factors were measured at age 14 years. Young adult disorders were assessed with the Diagnostic Interview Schedule. Alcohol refusal skills, academic skills, school and family bonding, parental rewards, school rewards, and family cohesion at age 14 years were associated with decreased risk for comorbidity at age 21 years. Copyright © 2010 Hawthorn Press.


This study examined adolescent delinquency and alcohol use in relation to young adult crime, alcohol use disorders (AUDs), and risky sex. Analyses further examined the influences of late childhood involvement in these problem behavior outcomes, with mediation through teen delinquency and alcohol use, and examined differences in the pathways for youth from low- compared to middle-income backgrounds. Method: Multiple-group latent growth curve modeling was conducted using data collected from a sample of 808 youth followed from age 10 to age 24. Self-report assessments included delinquent involvement, alcohol use, and sexual activity in late childhood; delinquency and alcohol use in adolescence; and crime, AUDs, and risky sex in early adulthood. Results: Late childhood delinquent involvement was associated with young adult crime, AUDs, and risky sex indirectly through adolescent delinquency, and had a persistent direct effect on crime. Adolescent delinquency also mediated the relation between early sex onset and crime. Early alcohol use predicted a higher level of, and a faster rate of increase in, adolescent drinking, which predicted, in turn, young adult AUDs and risky sex. Significant group differences indicated stronger associations between adolescent delinquency and each young adult outcome for youth from low- compared to those from middle-income backgrounds. Conclusions: Early intervention may help prevent the development of crime, AUDs, and risky sex behaviors, especially among disadvantaged youth. Copyright © 2010 John Wiley & Sons, Inc.


Maternal depression has been implicated in the development of adolescent substance use. Conceptualizing depression as a continuum, the aims of this study are to (a) understand the relationship between maternal depressed mood and risk factors associated with adolescent substance use; (b) understand the relationship between maternal depressed mood and level and growth in adolescent alcohol, cigarette, and marijuana use assessed at multiple time points during adolescence; and (c) examine the unique and relative contribution of maternal depressed mood after taking into account contextual risk factors related to adolescent substance use. Participants are 792 children and their mothers. Latent growth modeling is used with adolescent alcohol, cigarette, and marijuana use treated as ordinal variables. Child depressive phenomena and child antisocial behavior partially explain the relationship between maternal depressed mood and adolescent alcohol and cigarette use. Mothers' own substance use does not contribute to level or change in adolescent substance use after other risk factors are considered. Copyright © 2009 Hammill Institute on Disabilities.
Other Research
Neurobehavioral Development

The Neurobehavioral Research Center is a collaboration between Boys Town National Research Hospital and Boys Town Youth Care Services to study and improve methods for intervening early in the lives of children with behavioral and mental health problems. Boys Town’s long history of providing effective treatment for children with a wide range of disorders and Boys Town National Research Hospital’s successful history of research over the past 40 years, position the Center to become a state-of-the-art collaborative research effort that will offer evidence-based solutions for treatment to the larger mental health community. The Center actively partners with researchers both locally and nationally to develop the best practices to treat behavioral and mental health problems in children. The Center focuses on research programs in four areas: mood and anxiety disorders, disruptive behavior disorders, substance abuse, and web and computer-based therapeutics.


Individuals with substance abuse (SA) histories show impairment in the computations necessary for decision-making, including expected value (EV) and prediction error (PE). Neuroimaging findings, however, have been inconsistent. Sixteen youth with (SApositive) and 29 youth without (SAnegative) substance abuse histories completed a passive avoidance task while undergoing functional MRI. The groups did not significantly differ on age, gender composition or IQ. Behavioral results indicated that SApositive youth showed significantly less learning than SAnegative youth over the task. SApositive youth show problems representing EV information when attempting to avoid sub-optimal choices in bilateral inferior frontal gyrus and striatum. Furthermore, SApositive youth showed a significantly increased differential response to reward versus punishment feedback modulation by PE in posterior cingulate cortex relative to SAnegative youth. Disrupted decision-making is likely to exacerbate SA as a failure to represent EV during the avoidance of sub-optimal choices is likely to increase the likelihood of SA. With respect to the representation of PE, future work will be needed to clarify the impact of different substances on the neural systems underpinning PE representation. Moreover, interaction of age/development and substance abuse on PE signaling will need to be explored. Copyright © 2016 Elsevier Ireland Ltd.


Previous work has shown that patients with conduct problems (CP) show impairments in reinforcement-based decision-making. However, studies with patients have not previously demonstrated any relationships between impairment in any of the neurocomputations underpinning reinforcement-based decision-making and specific symptom sets [e.g. level of CP and/or callous-unemotional (CU) traits]. Seventy-two youths [20 female, mean age = 13.81 (SD = 2.14), mean IQ = 102.34 (SD = 10.99)] from a residential treatment program and the community completed a passive avoidance task while undergoing functional MRI. Greater levels of CP were associated with poorer task performance. Reduced representation of expected values (EV) when making avoidance responses within bilateral anterior insula cortex/inferior frontal gyrus (AIC/iFG) and striatum was associated with greater levels of CP but not CU traits. The current data indicate that difficulties in the use of value information to motivate decisions to avoid suboptimal choices are associated with increased levels of CP (though not severity of CU traits). Moreover, they account for the behavioral deficits observed during reinforcement-based decision-making in youth with CP. In short, an individual’s relative failure to utilize value information within AIC/iFG to avoid bad choices is associated with elevated levels of CP. Copyright © 2016 John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

The presence of a large cavum septum pellucidum (CSP) has been previously associated with antisocial behavior/psychopathic traits in an adult community sample. The current study investigated the relationship between a large CSP and symptom severity in disruptive behavior disorders (DBD; conduct disorder and oppositional defiant disorder). Structural MRI scans of youth with DBDs (N = 32) and healthy comparison youth (N = 27) were examined for the presence of a large CSP and if this was related to symptom severity. Replicating previous results, a large CSP was associated with DBD diagnosis, proactive aggression, and level of psychopathic traits in youth. However, the presence of a large CSP was unrelated to aggression or psychopathic traits within the DBD sample. Early brain mal-development may increase the risk of a DBD diagnosis, but does not mark a particularly severe form of DBD within patients receiving these diagnoses. Copyright © 2013 The Author. Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry © 2012 Association for Child and Adolescent Mental Health.

Impaired functional but preserved structural connectivity in limbic white matter tracts in youth with conduct disorder or oppositional defiant disorder plus psychopathic traits. Psychiatry Research, 202(3), 239-244. doi:10.1016/j.pscychresns.2011.11.002

Youths with conduct disorder or oppositional defiant disorder and psychopathic traits (CD/ODD+PT) are at high risk of adult antisocial behavior and psychopathy. Neuroimaging studies demonstrate functional abnormalities in orbitofrontal cortex and the amygdala in both youths and adults with psychopathic traits. Diffusion tensor imaging in psychopathic adults demonstrates disrupted structural connectivity between these regions (uncinate fasiculus). The current study examined whether functional neural abnormalities present in youths with CD/ODD+PT are associated with similar white matter abnormalities. Youths with CD/ODD+PT and comparison participants completed 3.0 T diffusion tensor scans and functional magnetic resonance imaging scans. Diffusion tensor imaging did not reveal disruption in structural connections within the uncinate fasiculus or other white matter tracts in youths with CD/ODD+PT, despite the demonstration of disrupted amygdala→prefrontal functional connectivity in these youths. These results suggest that disrupted amygdala→frontal white matter connectivity as measured by fractional anisotropy is less sensitive than imaging measurements of functional perturbations in youths with psychopathic traits. If white matter tracts are intact in youths with this disorder, childhood may provide a critical window for intervention and treatment, before significant structural brain abnormalities solidify. Copyright © 2012 Elsevier Ireland Ltd.


The clinical application of neuroscience research may not always be readily apparent, but two recent U.S. Supreme Court decisions highlight how neuroscience is beginning to guide public policy. In these cases, the Supreme Court took into consideration the mounting body of research that brain processes underlying decision making are still immature during adolescence. Although this research was not central in either decision, the Court’s acknowledgment and reliance on this research raises interesting questions about how we as a society will assess questions of culpability in the future, especially with youth. This article presents some of the key findings from studies using diffuser tensor imaging, which measures the
integrity of white matter tracts, and functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI), which measures changes in brain activation in the context of a task and the strength of functional integration, which provides information on how key immaturities in the adolescent brain may speak to their well-recognized patterns of behavior. Copyright © 2012 American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry.


The Origins of Antisocial Behavior: A Developmental Perspective provides an overview of the recent research on the development of antisocial behavior and synthesizes this information to inform readers not only of the risks, but also how they interact, to result in antisocial and aggressive behavior. The volume is divided into three sections: advances in neuroscience, advances in behavioral and clinical research, and legal and policy implications. Specific topics include genetic markers and aggressive behavior, the use of fMRI to track adolescent brain development, the role of peer influences on aggression, parenting and temperament, screening tools for diagnosing antisocial behavior in toddlers and adolescents, and how new research will influence interventions, policy, and future study. Experts from genetics, neuroimaging, and developmental science discuss the insights these scientific approaches have provided in understanding how nature and the environment interact in the emergence of antisocial behavior. The Origins of Antisocial Behavior is an important and unique resource that will be of use to developmental scientists, mental health professionals, and policymakers involved in the juvenile justice system. Copyright © 2012 Oxford University Press.


Objective: Amygdala dysfunction has been reported to exist in youths and adults with psychopathic traits. However, there has been disagreement as to whether this dysfunction reflects a primary emotional deficit or is secondary to atypical attentional control. The authors examined the validity of the contrasting predictions. Method: Participants were 15 children and adolescents (ages 10–17 years) with both disruptive behavior disorders and psychopathic traits and 17 healthy comparison youths. Functional MRI was used to assess the response of the amygdala and regions implicated in top-down attentional control (the dorsomedial and lateral frontal cortices) to emotional expression under conditions of high and low attentional load. Results: Relative to youths with disruptive behavior disorders and psychopathic traits, healthy comparison subjects showed a significantly greater increase in the typical amygdala response to fearful expressions under low relative to high attentional load conditions. There was also a selective inverse relationship between the response to fearful expressions under low attentional load and the callous-unemotional component (but not the narcissism or impulsivity component) of psychopathic traits. In contrast, the two groups did not differ in the significant recruitment of the dorsomedial and lateral frontal cortices as a function of attentional load. Conclusions: Youths with disruptive behavior disorders and psychopathic traits showed reduced amygdala responses to fearful expressions under low attentional load but no indications of increased recruitment of regions implicated in top-down attentional control. These findings suggest that the emotional deficit observed in youths with disruptive behavior disorders and psychopathic traits is primary and not secondary to increased top-down attention to nonemotional stimulus features. Copyright © 2012 American Psychiatric Association.


Using behavioral and blood oxygen level dependent (BOLD) response indices through functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI), the current study investigated whether youths with disruptive behavior disorders (conduct disorder and oppositional defiant disorder) plus psychopathic traits (DBD +
PT) show aberrant sensitivity to eye gaze information generally and/or whether they show particular insensitivity to eye gaze information in the context of fearful expressions. The participants were 36 children and adolescents (ages 10–17 years); 17 had DBD + PT and 19 were healthy comparison subjects. Participants performed a spatial attention paradigm where spatial attention was cued by eye gaze in faces displaying fearful, angry, or neutral affect. Eye gaze sensitivity was indexed both behaviorally and as BOLD response. There were no group differences in behavioral response: both groups showed significantly faster responses if the target was in the congruent spatial direction indicated by eye gaze. Neither group showed a Congruence × Emotion interaction; neither group showed an advantage from the displayer's emotional expression behaviorally. However, the BOLD response revealed a significant Group × Congruence × Emotion interaction. The comparison youth showed increased activity within the dorsal endogenous orienting network (superior parietal lobule and inferior parietal sulcus) for fearful congruent relative to incongruent trials relative to the youth with DBD + PT. The results are discussed with reference to current models of DBD + PT and possible treatment innovations. Copyright © 2012 Cambridge University Press.
Other Research
Miscellaneous

Some of our applied research has been directed at areas that do not fall into specific categories in this research bibliography.

**In Press**


**Published**


This study explored the interaction patterns of family members of individuals with disabilities in a simulated interdisciplinary team problem-solving process. Participants included 15 members of a training cohort within a Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental and Related Disabilities program. Family trainees and non-family trainees engaged in a simulated team discussion at two points during the training year (Time 1 and Time 2). To understand how family members and other professionals interact in interdisciplinary problem-solving meetings, we applied three coding schemes to the interdisciplinary team discussions to measure language similarity, dominance and domineeringness, problem solving, and balance of power. The results suggested there were trends in the communication dynamics between family trainees and non-family trainees at Time 1 and Time 2. For example, language similarity between groups was high at both Time 1 and Time 2, yet families were less successful at controlling the team conversation at Time 2. The implications of these and other results are discussed. Copyright © 2015 SAGE.


The ground under nonprofits is shifting quickly and profoundly, especially for organizations with a mission to ameliorate or solve intractable social problems. In the current political and economic environment, the demand for increased and more measureable service impacts is greater than ever before, with agency and program funding increasingly tied to demonstrable success. This is ultimately a positive trend for the nonprofit sector, but it is a sea change in its operational implications for many nonprofits. The scrutiny and accompanying demands for accountability will become even more intense as government budget woes deepen and performance-based contracting proponents become more common. To thrive during this period of change and uncertainty, savvy organizations are getting out in front of these changes and developing clear and effective long-term strategies to influence positive change in their communities and in their clients' lives. Copyright © 2014 Springer.


A key barrier to conducting research involving children and families is the difficulty of creating partnerships among researchers, treatment agencies, and schools. This article describes several key
factors that were essential to establishing an effective research collaboration between practitioners and university-based researchers, including a mutual respect for the unique needs of research and practice; a strategy for joint decision making; a partnership model of incremental growth; a plan for mentoring junior faculty and students; a format for regular contact between the partners; and a plan for long-term sustainability. This collaboration has conducted over a dozen evaluation studies, as well as examined best practice issues surrounding the needs of children and families with serious emotional and behavioral needs. Even more important has been the lines of research that have been developed from this partnership which keeps the collaboration focused. The lessons learned from this research partnership should inform other collaborations. Copyright © 2010 Hammill Institute on Disabilities.


At last the field of applied behavior analysis has a beautifully crafted, true textbook that can proudly stand cover to cover and spine to spine beside any of the expensive, imposing, and ornately designed textbooks used by college instructors who teach courses in conventional areas of education or psychology. In this review, I fully laud this development, credit Cooper, Heron, and Heward for making it happen, argue that it signifies checkered flag for students and professors, and recommend the book for classes in applied behavior analysis everywhere. Subsequently, I review its chapters, each of which could easily stand alone as publications in their own right. Finally, I supply a cautionary note, a yellow flag to accompany the well-earned checkered flags, by pointing out that, as is true with all general textbooks on applied behavior analysis, a major portion of the references involves research on persons who occupy only a tail of the normal distribution. To attain the mainstream role Skinner envisioned and most (if not all) behavior analysts desire, the field will have to increase its focus on persons who reside under the dome of that distribution. Copyright © 2010 Society for the Experimental Analysis of Behavior, Inc.


This is a brief discussion of the effects of legislation regarding standardized testing on children, parents, teachers, and schools. Copyright © 2010 Family Spectrum.


The purpose of this chapter is to contribute to the latter, expanding subject area, parent training; the specific intent is to provide school psychologists with information that will enhance their ability to help parents solve their children’s school relevant behavior problems. The chapter has two primary dimensions. The first is obvious - the chapter provides examples of concepts and applications that significantly contribute to understanding the development and management of child behaviors exhibited at home and school. The second is more subtle - the chapter describes those concepts and applications in mostly nontechnical, user-friendly language, the kind of language that is much more likely to reflect how parents speak in their everyday capacity as parents than the technical language that dominates most literature in psychology. Copyright © 2009 Guilford Press.


The present study was an initial exploration of the fund and source(s) of knowledge that undergraduate students possess about school psychology. A total of 622 students completed a five-part inventory that assessed their understanding of various psychology disciplines. The responses given for school psychology and clinical psychology were compared across psychology majors, education majors, and “other” majors. Results indicated that although undergraduate students rated their perceived knowledge of school psychology significantly higher than clinical psychology, the mean ratings for both disciplines were low.
Undergraduates utilized different sources of information to learn of clinical and school psychology. Both psychology and education majors assigned low priority to school psychology as a graduate school choice. Further, psychology majors rated clinical psychologists as being more involved in individual therapy, assessment, consultation, and research than school psychologists. The implications of these findings as they pertain to future recruitment strategies are discussed. Copyright © 2001 National Association of School Psychologists.


For the families in Palm Beach County who entered the child abuse and neglect system as a result of having a child placed into emergency shelter, their experience was that the system was frequently intimidating, confusing, and fragmented. The reaction of the children and their families to this system was often defensiveness and resistance. To increase the system’s effectiveness, it was redesigned and privatized. The redesigned system included centralized shelter placement, a comprehensive assessment, independent service coordination, and treatment service provision within a managed care model. By emphasizing family involvement and quality service provision, the goal was to increase voluntary participation and improve family outcomes. Based on initial data, it appears that the redesigned system has been successfully implemented and has made notable progress toward meeting its system flow timeframes. The initial data also indicate that high percentages of families are participating in and are satisfied with the system, that children are spending less time in shelter placements, and that only one family has reentered the system. Copyright © 2001 Human Sciences Press, Inc.


In 1996, Palm Beach County, Florida, received 6,000 reports of child abuse or neglect representing approximately 10,000 to 15,000 children with 600 children and families having confirmed reports of severe physical or sexual abuse. Children and families who entered the county’s child protection system often found that services were fragmented, confusing, frequently intimidating, and provided without family input. In order to improve services to these families, changes to the system needed to be made. The authors designed an evaluation that would monitor the system’s changes, examine the services provided, and assess the outcomes for children and their families. Copyright © 2000 The de la Parte Institute.


This article describes practical methods for agencies to *move* from a process to an outcomes focus when preparing and presenting reports to payers and regulators. Essential components of an outcomes system, the source for information used to construct outcomes reports, are outlined (e.g., choose the right outcomes, use a program evaluation model, include appropriate outcome domains, and design or purchase an information management system). Methods for preparing and presenting reports for payers and regulators (e.g., start with an executive summary, use consistent terms, use graphs and charts, use benchmarks or industry standards, and disaggregate the data) are drawn from experiences at Father Flanagan’s Boys’ Home. Finally, examples from reports to two common payers are provided (public sector contractors and managed-care organizations). Copyright © 2000 West Virginia University Press.


The Benefits-Based Management of Recreation Services (BBM) Model is described in this article. In this approach, leisure activities are designed to be outcome-focused. Finally, recommendations for the
application of this Model to child and family services are described. Copyright © 1999 The Alliance for Children and Families.


Social validation is the assessment of social acceptability of intervention techniques and outcomes. Some states have done surveys of a large number of stakeholders of child and family service providers to investigate this. The application of this approach to program planning and evaluation for individual agencies is described. Copyright © 1998 The Alliance for Children and Families.


Providers must seize the initiative and drive performance standards in directions that will advance practice and policy. Daly and Nordlinger suggest that providers need a much greater say in the construction of outcome measures for child and family treatment systems. Examples of during-program performance standards and postcare or long-term performance standards are given. A proposed process to develop the standards is laid out in ten steps. Copyright © 1997 The Alliance for Children and Families.


Relationship-building is the tie that binds children to adults and, consequently, to the skills they need to succeed. Research tells us how important relationships are to children in out-of-home care, but too often is taken for granted. This article emphasizes that relationship skills need to be actively taught and enhanced by training and careful monitoring. A list of “do’s” and “don’ts” is given, along with suggestions for what administrators can do to promote relationship-building. Copyright © 1995 The Alliance for Children and Families.


Programs flourish for a variety of reasons. The fact that they produce positive outcomes is not necessarily one of the reasons. Daly contends that if we are to make progress in youth and family services, we must separate those approaches that deliver outcomes from those that deliver rhetoric. Copyright © 1995 The Alliance for Children and Families.


Solving the problem of youth violence requires complex, long-term efforts and significant expense, something that supporters of current programs fail to realize. This article discusses programs and recommendations made by experts on youth violence (most notably those produced during a conference sponsored by the National Education Service) and why they fall short in identifying and addressing this growing problem. Copyright © 1995 The Alliance for Children and Families.


Decategorization is a process of restructuring funding sources and services to encourage interagency collaboration, out-of-home placement prevention, and innovative programming driven by needs of families as opposed to bureaucratic contingencies. In this study a community needs assessment survey was used as one of the first steps in decategorization program planning. The survey assessed the most serious problems, the priorities for tax dollar support, and the service needs in a county beginning decategorization of child welfare services. Methods, results, and implications are discussed and compared to other types of data available about needs of the residents of the county as a model for other communities that may be undertaking decategorization projects or other large-scale planning efforts. Copyright © 1994 John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Many psychologists believe a Kuhnian revolution—a competitive event between incommensurate paradigms in which a winner displaces losers after chaotic upheaval—has occurred in psychology. Cognitive psychology is said to be displacing behavioral psychology and psychoanalysis but few published data support this thesis. Social science citation records from the leading journals in cognitive psychology, behavioral psychology, and psychoanalysis between 1979 and 1988 were analyzed. Results show an increasing trend for cognitive psychology but also high citation rates with no downward trends for behavioral psychology. Citation rates for psychoanalysis are not as high, but indications of decline are marginal. These findings do not support the Kuhnian displacement thesis on changes in modern psychology. Copyright © 1993 American Psychological Association.
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### Publications by Category (1991-2016): Periodicals/Journals

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333 137
### Publications by Category (1991-2016)

#### Publications within Books and Other Sources

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Publications by Category (1991-2016): Books and Other Sources

1 Marijuana and Mental Health
1 Outcomes for Children and Youth with Emotional and Behavioral Disorders and their Families: Programs and Evaluation Best Practices
1 Parenthood in America: Undervalued, Underpaid, Under Siege
1 Practical Handbook of School Psychology: Effective Practices for the 21st Century
1 Practitioner’s Guide to Evidence-Based Psychotherapy
1 Principles and Practice of Sleep Medicine in the Child
1 Proceedings of the 11th Annual Florida Mental Health Institute Research Conference
2 Proceedings of the 12th Annual Florida Mental Health Institute Research Conference
2 Proceedings of the 13th Annual Florida Mental Health Institute Research Conference
1 Proceedings of the 14th Annual Florida Mental Health Institute Research Conference
2 Proceedings of the 17th Annual Florida Mental Health Institute Research Conference
4 Proceedings of the 19th Annual Florida Mental Health Institute Research Conference
1 Proceedings of the 20th Annual Florida Mental Health Institute Research Conference
1 Proceedings of the 22nd Annual Florida Mental Health Institute Research Conference
1 Proceedings of the 4th Annual Florida Mental Health Institute Research Conference
1 Proceedings of the 5th Annual Florida Mental Health Institute Research Conference
1 Promoting Treatment Adherence: A Practical Handbook for Health Care Providers
1 Psychologists’ Desk Reference (3rd Ed.)
1 Rapport
2 Readings on Language and Literacy: Essays in Honor of Jeanne S. Chall
1 Residential Interventions for Children, Adolescents, and Families: A Best Practice Guide
1 School-Based Preventive Education in the World
1 Single Case Experimental Designs
1 Suicide from a Global Perspective: Risk Assessment and Management
3 Teaching-Family Association Newsletter
1 The Association for Behavior Analysis International Newsletter
1 The Brown University Child and Adolescent Behavior Letter
2 The Corsini Encyclopedia of Psychology
2 The Eighteenth Mental Measurements Yearbook
1 The Encyclopedia of Human intelligence
2 The Origins of Antisocial Behavior: A Developmental Perspective
1 The Oxford Handbook of Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychology
3 The Parents’ Guide to Psychological First Aid: Helping Children and Adolescents Cope with Predictable Life Crises
3 The SAGE Encyclopedia of Abnormal and Clinical Psychology
1 The School Services Sourcebook
1 Therapeutic Residential Care with Children and Youth: Developing Evidence-Based international Practice
2 Tic Disorders, Trichotillomania, and Other Repetitive Behavior Disorders: Behavioral Approaches to Analysis and Treatment
1 Trichotillomania, Skin Picking and Other Body-Focused Repetitive Behaviors
1 What Research Has to Say About Reading Instruction
1 When Adolescents Can’t Read: Methods and Materials That Work

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Publications by Category (1991-2016)
Publications within Continuum Categories Overall
(n = 462)

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Total: 462

Families Homes: 22.7%
Behavioral & Interventions: 16.9%
Psychosocial Dev & Risk: 9.7%
Research Method: 8.9%
School Based Programs: 6.3%
Miscellaneous: 4.5%
Parental Discipline: 4.3%
Education at Risk Yth: 4.1%
Continuum of Care: 3.9%
Residential Treatment Center: 3.7%
Common Sense Parent: 3.5%
In-Home Family Services: 2.8%
Outpatient Behavioral Health: 2.6%
Intervene & Assess Services: 2.2%
Neurobehavioral Development: 1.9%
Foster Care Services: 1.3%
National Hotline: 0.3%
Parent Connectors: 0.2%
Publications by Category

The chart above displays the percentage of publications by category from 1991-2005 vs. 2006-2016, with the total number of publications appearing at the top of a given category. Larger purple bars indicate recent areas of emphasis for research. For example, publications have increased recently in the categories of Integrated Continuum of Care, In-Home Family Services, Parent Connectors, Psychosocial Development & Risk, and Neurobehavioral Development. These increases primarily reflect the youth-care research and program development recommendations from the National Research Institute Scientific Advisory Panel and the Boys Town Strategic Plan directives.
The National Research Institute℠
for Child and Family Studies
disseminates research to promote
the Boys Town Mission and
evaluates the effectiveness of its
programs and services.

BOYS TOWN
National Research Institute

14100 Crawford Street
Boys Town NE 68010
www.boystown.org/nri