

Heskia Barad, I., Topelberg, O., & Roded A. D. (August, 2018), Targeting behavior problems of preschoolers: Changing children's developmental trajectory. Paper presented at the 28th annual meeting of the *European Early Childhood Education Research Association*, Budapest, Hungary.

Abstract

Introduction

The current study was designed to evaluate the efficacy of a short-term intervention (named MASLOOL) for reducing behavior problems in preschools, and restoring a positive developmental trajectory in the early childhood years.

Early-onset of severe disruptive behavior (aggressive behavior; non-compliance; and emotional volatility) place the child on a risk for a negative developmental trajectory, such as antisocial behavior and youth delinquency (Broidy et al., 2003; Longman, Hawes, & Kohlhoff, 2016).

Therefore, it seems essential to apply intervention as early in life as possible.

Based on positive effect of previous early childhood short –term programs (reduced aggressive behavior) (Bierman et al., 2013; Farrington & Welsh, 2007), and long term implications such as less involvement in juvenile arrests) (CPPRG, 2010a), Maslool program was developed in order to assist significant adults in the lives of preschoolers' with severe behavior problems in enhancing children's cooperativity and reducing behavior problems. The program is grounded in an eco-systemic paradigm which focuses on how the interactions between individuals and environments underlie psycho-social health outcomes (Bronfenbrenner, 1977).

In 27 preschool classes, teachers received training from behavior analysts, and parents met with psychologists. Functional behavior analyses were used to identify environmental antecedents and consequences of problem behaviors, and to design classroom intervention (Hurl, et al., 2016). Parent sessions provided psycho-education on child behavior, promoting positive parent-child interactions, and fostering positive home-school communication (Somech & Elizur, 2012). Observational and self-report data were collected pre- and post-intervention to measure the efficacy of the program.

Main finding or discussion

The program was evaluated using quantitative data collected at baseline and following 4 months of intervention. Results indicate 85% reduction in refusal behaviors, 86% in verbal violence, and 85% in physical violence.

Implications, practice or policy

MASLOOL was found to be an effective short-term preventive intervention for reducing behavior problems of young preschoolers and promoting home-school collaboration.