

The Chicago Parent Program: *Teaching Better Ways to Address Difficult Children's Behavioral Problems*

The Challenge:

Most programs to enhance parenting skills and reduce behavior problems in young children are designed for white, middle-class parents – yet minority parents and those in low-income neighborhoods may not share the same values or face the same childrearing challenges. Consequently, many parenting programs are less relevant and effective in promoting positive parenting behavior and reducing problem behaviors in those families.

The Goal:

Help low-income and ethnic minority parents improve their childrearing skills and effectively manage their children's difficult behaviors; counter the trend in which prevention programs seldom lead to long-term behavior improvement.

An Innovative Solution:

Using a program developed in partnership with ethnic minority parents, bring parents together in a group setting to watch and discuss videotaped vignettes of typical but challenging parenting situations and discuss the best ways to handle them.

What It Is

- A 12-session parenting program, developed and tested by staff at the Rush University College of Nursing through grants supported by the National Institutes of Health, to reduce behavior problems in young children by strengthening parenting skills.

What It Does

- In weekly meetings, employs a series of 157 videotaped vignettes of real parents and children filmed in various settings to stimulate discussion and problem-solving among a group of parents on how to manage difficult, real-life child behaviors.

How It Stands Out

- Developed in collaboration with an advisory group of African American and Latino parents from a range of economic backgrounds, to ensure that the content was culturally and contextually relevant for families.
- A randomized trial of seven day care centers serving low-income families in Chicago showed significant decreases in child behavior problems (based on parent and independent observer ratings) and parent reliance on corporal punishment.
- Parents say they are more confident and more consistent in their discipline.
- All effects were maintained up to one-year post-intervention. (Most brief prevention programs rarely show long-term benefits for observed child behavior.)
- Relatively inexpensive to deliver, costing as little as \$292 per child, with a return on investment exceeding 900 percent.
- Program is used at the Mayo Clinic, Harlem Children's Zone, Chicago Head Start, Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center and numerous other agencies across the country.

Where To Learn More

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