The National Alliance of Children’s Trust and Prevention Funds’ Research Review is a new, online resource from the Alliance to help state Children’s Trust and Prevention Funds and their partners stay up-to-date on the latest research and innovative approaches in the field of child abuse and neglect prevention. State prevention leaders at Children’s Trust Funds across the country told us in 2010 that bridging the gap between research and practice was a critical need. The Research Review is the Alliance’s response to that request.

The next issue of the Research Review is scheduled to be released in May 2011. Please contact your state Children’s Trust Fund (find contact information here) to request to be alerted when new issues are released.

We hope this will be a useful resource for you and we welcome your suggestions, questions and feedback. Please send any communications to researchreview@ctfalliance.org.

Prevention Research Article Summaries

Stay on top of recently published scholarly articles related to the prevention of child abuse and neglect. Each listing below includes the bottom line of what you need to know about the article, a practitioner-friendly summary of the article, and the authors’ abstract from the journal, along with a link to view or purchase the full article.

PROGRAM EVALUATIONS


BOTTOM LINE: ACT Against Violence Parents Raising Safe Kids (ACT-PRSK) is an 8-session parenting education program designed by the American Psychological Association and intended to be delivered in a variety of community-based settings. The article describes the program and an evaluation of its effectiveness. ACT-PRSK was found to be effective in improving most (but not all) of the parenting attitudes and behaviors assessed in the study, and in reducing parental spanking and hitting children with objects. Overall, ACT-PRSK appears to be an effective and relatively low-cost parenting education program with parents at various level of risk for child maltreatment.
SUMMARY: This article describes a parenting education program called ACT Against Violence Parents Raising Safe Kids (ACT-PRSK) and an evaluation of its effectiveness. ACT-PRSK is an 8-session program designed by the American Psychological Association and intended to be delivered in a variety of community-based settings. The program focuses on teaching parents about (a) non-violent discipline; (b) child development; (c) anger management and social problem-solving skills; (d) effects of media on children; and (e) methods to protect children from exposure to violence. More information about the program is available here.

The article describes an evaluation of the program for which participants of various risk levels were recruited – from a community agency (voluntary participants with no particular known risk factors for child maltreatment), a mental health center (voluntary participants seeking education and treatment for child or family mental health or behavioral issues) and a court (mandated to participate after coming to the attention of the child welfare system). Fifty parents participated in the program and made up the intervention group, completing a program-specific tool called the ACT scale which measures parenting knowledge, attitudes and behaviors both before and after participating in the program. Another 42 parents were assigned to the comparison group and did not receive the intervention, but completed the ACT scale upon recruitment and again 8 weeks later. Participants were not randomly assigned to the different groups, making this a quasi-experimental study. The evaluation found that parents in the intervention group made significant improvements in several areas on the ACT scale, and those improvements were significantly greater than changes among the comparison group over the same period of time. Specifically, after participating in the program, parents significantly increased their use of methods to teach positive, nonviolent social skills to their children, and their perceptions of the importance of these behaviors. These parents also reported reductions in harsh and hostile parenting behaviors and attitudes and physical violence toward children. They reported less spanking and hitting their children with objects after the 8-week program, to a greater degree that comparison group parents. On other sections of the ACT scale, including beliefs about crying children, media literacy, and family communication and affection, intervention group improvements were not significantly greater than comparison group improvements. Overall, ACT-PRSK appears to be an effective and relatively low-cost parenting education program with parents at various level of risk for child maltreatment.

ABSTRACT: The ACT Against Violence Parents Raising Safe Kids program (ACT-PRSK) is an interactive violence prevention program developed by the American Psychological Association for parents of young children. The program teaches and supports parents in the areas of child development, roots and consequences of violence, anger management for adults and children, social problem solving, positive discipline, and the impact of media violence on children. Ninety-two parents/caregivers of young children participated in a study of the effects of the program on parenting behaviors. The first 50 participants were assigned to the intervention group and completed the ACT-PRSK program, and the remaining 42 parents/caregivers served as comparisons. Results indicated reduced spanking and reduced rate of hitting children with objects for the ACT-PRSK participants. Furthermore, the ACT-PRSK group evidenced improved knowledge, behaviors, and beliefs regarding violence prevention and parenting. Results provide support for the efficacy of this brief intervention for preventing child maltreatment.
TWO ARTICLES ON
THE INCREDIBLE YEARS PARENT TRAINING PROGRAM

BOTTOM LINE: The Incredible Years Parent Training Program is a promising approach for providing parenting education to mandated or court-referred parents. The program developer has provided guidelines for adapting the evidence-based prevention program for use with child-welfare-involved families, and the adapted version of the program has been found to be effective.

SUMMARY: These two articles illustrate a recent boost to the evidence base for the Incredible Years Parent Training Program (IY), particularly as it applies to families involved in child welfare. While it has been considered an evidence-based program for some time – with demonstrated effectiveness both as a universal prevention program and for use with parents whose children have been diagnosed with ODD, CD and ADHD – IY has only recently been evaluated with mandated, child-welfare-involved parents. Marcynyszyn, Maher, & Corwin evaluated an initial implementation of IY by two agencies working with this population. They worked with the program developer to make appropriate adaptations to the program, including extending the number of sessions and enrolling a smaller number of parents in each group. They found that it had positive effects on parenting outcomes for parents in this group despite some implementation difficulties and facilitators’ feedback that the video vignettes provided for use in the program were not culturally and socioeconomically relevant to the participants. Webster-Stratton (2010), the creator of the program, describes how the program can be adapted for use with child welfare-involved parents while maintaining fidelity to the program’s theory of change. Webster-Stratton’s openness to adaptations of her evidence-based program is a real contribution to the field, given the increasing interest among CPS agencies and family court judges in parenting education, and the dearth of evidence-based approaches for this population.


ABSTRACT: This study evaluates four group sessions of the Incredible Years (IY) Parenting Training Program used for the first-time in two child welfare agencies in New York State. Few studies have examined process and evaluation outcomes of evidence-based parenting programs in child welfare. Qualitative staff interviews and surveys on parenting behaviors were used to examine program processes, improvements in parenting behaviors, and participant satisfaction. Program participation was associated with less parental distress, defensive responding, dysfunctional parent-child interactions, child difficulty, total stress, and greater empathy and social support. The effectiveness of this evidence-based, parent education program in the context of a child welfare population, as well as implementation challenges and recommendations, are discussed.
ABSTRACT: Families referred to child welfare for maltreatment and neglect are frequently mandated to attend parenting programmes. Evidence-based parenting programmes (EBPs) are under-utilised or not delivered with fidelity for this population. The Incredible Years (IY) parenting programme is an EPB that has been proven to reduce harsh parenting, increase positive discipline and nurturing parenting, reduce conduct problems and improve children’s social competence. There is also promising preliminary evidence that IY is an effective intervention for families involved in child welfare and for foster parents. This article describes how the updated IY parenting basic programme is delivered with fidelity to this population.

META-ANALYSES & RESEARCH SYNTHESSES


BOTTOM LINE: Researchers analyzed data from 142 published, randomized evaluations of parenting education programs initiated during pregnancy or in the first 6 months after the birth of a child. They found that on average, the programs had small, statistically significant, positive effects on a variety of parent and child outcomes, including a reduction in child abuse and neglect. The effects were sustained over time. The authors conclude that parenting education around the transition to parenthood is effective and should be made more widely available and accessible.

SUMMARY: This study analyzed data from 142 previously published, randomized evaluations of parenting education programs initiated during pregnancy or in the first 6 months after the birth of a child. On average, the programs were found to be effective in improving parents’ parenting skills, stress levels, health-promoting behaviors and couple adjustment; and children’s cognitive development, social development, motor development and mental health. All of these effects were in the “very small” to “small” range, but were statistically significant and sustained over time. On average, evaluations that included measures of child abuse and neglect (CAN, measured either using CPS data or the Child Abuse Potential Inventory) had very small, but significant, effects. Those programs that specifically targeted CAN (20 evaluations included in this meta-analysis) were found to have small effects on that outcome, while those that did not target CAN but measured it as an outcome (9 evaluations) had no statistically significant effect on it. Other interesting findings included that programs lasting between 3 and 6 months had the strongest effects on parenting and on children’s cognitive development; and that selective and indicated programs facilitated by professional staff had greater effects on children’s mental health than selective and indicated programs facilitated by paraprofessionals, but
this was not true among universal prevention programs. The authors conclude that parenting education around the transition to parenthood is effective and should be made more widely available and accessible.

**ABSTRACT:** The present meta-analysis integrates the effects of randomized controlled trials that focus on promoting effective parenting in the transition to parenthood. We included 142 papers on interventions which started during pregnancy or in the first 6 months after birth. Computations were based on random-effects models. On average, interventions had small to very small significant effects on parenting (d = .35 SD units), parental stress (d = .20), child abuse (d = .13), health-promoting behavior of parents (d=.15), cognitive development (d = .24), social development (d = .30), motor development of the child (d = .15), child mental health (d = .40), parental mental health (d = .31), and couple adjustment (d = .13). Most of the effects were maintained at follow-up. Effects varied by onset of the intervention, delivery mode, qualification of the intervener, length of intervention, intervention goals, and gender distribution. In addition, we found that older studies reported greater effect sizes. We conclude that parenting-focused interventions are effective and should be made accessible to more expectant and new parents.


**BOTTOM LINE:** This study reviewed the evidence from 15 studies of 14 prevention programs to determine the effectiveness of such efforts as a group. The review was limited to experimental and quasi-experimental studies that measured actual child maltreatment in programs that worked with families before any maltreatment had occurred. The review found only three programs that had strong effects on child maltreatment (Child-Parent Centers or CPC, Nurse-Family Partnership or NFP, and Parent Education Program for Teen Mothers). Some programs had “mixed or limited evidence” for preventing child maltreatment, while seven studies of six programs indicated no evidence of preventive effects. The authors identified common characteristics of CPC and NFP, the most effective programs, and examined the other programs in the study that shared those characteristics to examine which of those characteristics were associated with greater effectiveness. They found there was some evidence that interventions were more likely to be effective when they: targeted higher-risk parents; were delivered with high dosage; were comprehensive; and were delivered by professional staff. There was also greater effectiveness among programs that followed up with participants in the long-term. The authors also discuss characteristics of the studies that were less likely to find evidence of effectiveness. The authors conclude that the evidence base for the effectiveness of early childhood interventions in preventing maltreatment is weak. They make several research and policy recommendations to address this situation.

**SUMMARY:** Similar to the Pinquart & Teubert (2010) study described above, this study reviewed the evidence from a number of prevention programs to determine the effectiveness of such efforts as a group. However, this review was limited to studies that measured actual child maltreatment and not just risk factors and
correlates of maltreatment. The review was also limited to studies of programs that worked with families before any maltreatment had occurred (i.e., primary or selective prevention programs, but not indicated or tertiary programs). This review included studies that compared participants to a control or comparison group (not necessarily randomly assigned). Fifteen studies of 14 programs met the criteria for inclusion, and were reviewed. The review found only three programs that had strong effects on child maltreatment (Child-Parent Centers or CPC, Nurse-Family Partnership or NFP, and Parent Education Program for Teen Mothers). The majority of the programs had “mixed or limited evidence” for preventing child maltreatment, while seven studies of six programs indicated no evidence of preventive effects, with the comparison group’s rates of CAN either the same as or lower than the treatment group’s. The authors then looked at CPC and NFP, which showed evidence of reducing maltreatment by nearly twice as many percentage points as the other programs, and examined what characteristics they had in common. They also looked at the other programs in the study that shared those characteristics to examine which of those characteristics were associated with greater effectiveness. They found there was some evidence that interventions were more likely to be effective when they: targeted higher-risk parents; were delivered with high dosage; were comprehensive; and were delivered by professional staff. There was also greater effectiveness among programs that followed up with participants in the long-term, indicating that as the target children get older, the differences between the intervention and comparison groups gets larger. The authors also discuss characteristics of the studies that were less likely to find evidence of effectiveness. The authors conclude that the evidence base for the effectiveness of early childhood interventions in preventing maltreatment is weak. They make several research and policy recommendations to address this situation.

ABSTRACT: We reviewed the empirical evidence on whether early childhood primary prevention programs can reduce rates of child abuse and neglect. Fifteen studies of 14 programs for children ages birth to 5 years were completed from 1990 to 2007 and assessed impacts with methodological rigor. All but one of the programs intervened from birth to age 3 through home visits, parent education classes, or the provision of health services. The weighted average effect size of program participation was a 2.9 percentage-point reduction in maltreatment (6.6% vs. 9.5%), which is equivalent to a 31% reduction in the rate of maltreatment and a fifth of a standard deviation. Of the five programs showing significant reductions in substantiated rates of child maltreatment, three provide strong evidence of preventive effects. Only the Child-Parent Centers (CPCs) and the Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP) assessed longer term preventive effects. Common elements of these effective programs included implementation by professional staff, relatively high dosage and intensity, and comprehensiveness of scope. The major conclusion is that the evidence base for programs in early childhood to prevent child maltreatment remains relatively weak. To advance the field, more longer-term studies of a variety of intervention models are needed.
CULTURAL CONSIDERATIONS

THREE ARTICLES ON CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE PRACTICE WITH LATINO FAMILIES

BOTTOM LINE: Three articles related to parent training appeared in a recent special series on Culturally Responsive Cognitive and Behavioral Practice with Latino Families in the journal *Cognitive and Behavioral Practice*. Two articles explore cultural variables that can affect the effectiveness of parent training with Latino families. Another describes the process of adapting an existing, research-based parenting program to serve Latino families. One or more of these articles might be of value to direct service providers who are reaching out to Latino parents, especially if they have not worked extensively with that population before, or considering adapting programming to better serve Latino families.

SUMMARY: These three articles were part of a special series on Culturally Responsive Cognitive and Behavioral Practice with Latino Families in the journal *Cognitive and Behavioral Practice*. Barker, Cook, & Borrego (2010) review research on effectiveness of parent training programs with Latino families, and discuss how cultural variables should be taken into account when implementing parent training with Latino families. Calzada (2010) summarizes qualitative research on two Latino cultural values: familismo and respeto, examines the congruence between these values and parent training programs, and provides clinical guidelines for working with Latino families. Dumas (2010) describes the process of adapting an existing, research-based parenting program to serve Latino families. One or more of these articles might be of value to direct service providers who are reaching out to Latino parents, especially if they have not worked extensively with that population before, or considering adapting programming to better serve Latino families. (The full issue information is available [here](#).)


ABSTRACT: There has recently been increased attention given to understanding how cultural variables may have an impact on the efficacy of treatments with Latino families seeking psychological services. Within parent training programs, understanding the extent to which culture can affect parenting practices is vital to providing quality care. The focus of this article is to discuss how different cultural variables such as respeto, personalismo, machismo, marianismo, and acculturation can impact the efficacy of parent training programs for Latino families. Recommendations for addressing these cultural variables in parent training programs are provided.


ABSTRACT: Traditional frameworks of parenting have failed to capture the distinctive nature of parenting in Latino families. Cultural values likely influence
parenting practices. The study of cultural values may allow us to identify aspects of parenting that are unique to Latinos and which complement traditional frameworks of parenting. This paper presents qualitative work on two Latino cultural values, *familismo* and *respeto*, and examines ways in which these values may inform the provision of standard parent training programs with Latinos. The first study is an ethnography that explored the value of *familismo*. The second study consisted of focus groups in which Latina mothers discussed the value of *respeto*. Findings from these two studies are used to examine the cultural congruence of the characteristics of parent training programs and the Latino values of *familismo* and *respeto*. In light of the issues identified, clinical guidelines for working with Latino parents in parent training programs are offered.


**ABSTRACT:** This paper describes the Spanish adaptation of PACE – Parenting Our Children to Excellence. Successfully offered in preschools and daycare centers since 2002, PACE is a research-based preventive intervention to support families in their parenting task through discussions and activities that address practical childrearing issues and promote child coping-competence. Developed in response to community calls, the new program is known as CANNE - *Criando a Nuestros Niños hacia el Éxito*. The paper makes the processes linking original and adapted versions explicit by accounting for the conceptual and practical decisions that were made as CANNE was being developed. We begin by summarizing the challenges of adapting and translating a behavioral intervention, and by describing the coping-competence model that informs both versions of the program. We turn then to a detailed account of the adaptation itself and of its results. Specifically, we describe: (a) the consultation process at the origin of this adaptation, (b) the adaptation of the manual and the steps taken to establish the extent to which the English and Spanish versions correspond (adaptation fidelity), and (c) the translation of the manual and the cross-language comparison of measures to demonstrate that they yield comparable data when administered in English and Spanish.

**RESEARCH METHODS & REFLECTIONS**


**BOTTOM LINE:** This is an interesting, unusual article that acknowledges typical conflicts between program developers/implementers and evaluators and explores the role of the outside evaluator or academic partner.

**SUMMARY:** This is an interesting, unusual article that acknowledges typical conflicts between program developers/implementers and evaluators and explores the role of the outside evaluator or academic partner. The evaluators report on the negotiations and changes to the program design based on evaluators’ concerns that
a parent education program would not be effective. The evaluators believed that the 12-week program for court-referred parents was low in duration and intensity and should have addressed multiple social-ecological levels. In response to this concern, community coalitions received technical assistance to improve collaboration and availability of other supports for parents. The program was found to improve social support, communication, and stress and anger management for participating parents, but did not have significant effects on other measures of risk factors for child abuse. The evaluators also concluded that the TA to community coalitions was not effective in all communities and was not linked closely enough to the parenting course to improve its effectiveness.

ABSTRACT: The article outlines an evaluation in which multiple attempts were made to negotiate a more powerful program design. Results of a parent education intervention are briefly reported. Lasting change in human behavior requires the application of intense program dosages across ecological systems. Despite these recommendations from behavior change literature, many programs seek quick fixes with low dosage, uni-level interventions. What role should scholars and program evaluators play in informing clients about the duration and intensity required for effective parent education interventions? Implications and questions are presented for others involved in creating powerful behavior change interventions to address complex social issues.

OTHER STUDIES


BOTTOM LINE: This article reports on the development and validation of the Protective Factors Survey, available here. The five protective factors it measures correspond closely to the protective factors identified by the Center for the Study of Social Policy as the framework for the Strengthening Families initiative. This study establishes the PFS as a valid and reliable tool to measure change in protective factors for child maltreatment, and is a valuable contribution to the field of prevention. The article is heavy on statistics and is not written for a practitioner audience. It does, however, demonstrate the legitimacy of the PFS and could be used to assure funders, evaluators and researchers of the academic credentials of the tool.

SUMMARY: This article reports on the development and validation of the Protective Factors Survey, designed to measure five parental protective factors for child maltreatment. The PFS is the first validated tool developed to measure multiple protective factors. It was developed at the University of Kansas with support from the FRIENDS National Resource Center, and is available here. The five protective factors it measures (family functioning, emotional support, concrete support, knowledge of parenting and child development, and nurturing and attachment) correspond closely to the protective factors identified by the Center for the Study of Social Policy as the framework for the Strengthening Families
The authors describe the process of developing the survey and testing it in the field to establish its reliability and validity. These statistical terms refer to how well an instrument measures what it intends to measure (validity) and the extent to which it gives consistent results when administered with the same subjects at different times (reliability). A variety of data analysis methods were used to test the PFS, including having parents complete the draft PFS along with more established measures of child abuse risk to establish validity, and comparing responses to a group of items, called a subscale, related to each protective factor to establish reliability. Subscales of the PFS were negatively correlated with measures of child abuse potential, stress, and depression, and positive correlated with adaptive coping strategies. Three of the subscales showed adequate internal reliability. One subscale, knowledge of parenting and child development, could not be tested for internal reliability because the items each addressed different concepts; and another one, concrete support, did not quite achieve an adequate level of internal reliability. The authors may revise the survey in the future to address those concerns. Overall, this study establishes the PFS as a valid and reliable tool to measure change in protective factors for child maltreatment, and is a valuable contribution to the field of prevention. The article is heavy on statistics and is not written for a practitioner audience. It does, however, demonstrate the legitimacy of the PFS and could be used to assure funders, evaluators and researchers of the academic credentials of the tool.

**ABSTRACT:** OBJECTIVE: The objective of this study was to evaluate the internal structure of a self-report measure of multiple family-level protective factors against abuse and neglect and explore the relationship of this instrument to other measures of child maltreatment. METHODS: For the exploratory factor analysis, 11 agencies from 4 states administered the Protective Factors Survey (PFS), the Brief Child Abuse Potential Inventory (Ondersma et al., 2005), and another measure to establish content validity (N=249 participants). Exploratory factor analyses were conducted to obtain a small, integrated set of items that tap the targeted protective factors correlated with other theoretically important constructs. Correlations were computed to explore PFS criterion-related validity. Confirmatory factor analyses were conducted on an additional sample of 689 participants from 19 agencies across the United States. RESULTS: Exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses yielded a 4-factor solution, consisting of Family Functioning, Emotional Support, Concrete Support, and Nurturing and Attachment. Four measures were administered to assess constructs that were predicted to correlate negatively with the protective factors: child abuse potential, depression, stress, and maladaptive coping. The PFS was also predicted to correlate positively with adaptive coping such as use of emotional and instrumental social support and positive reframing. Overall, the PFS subscales were significantly related to these measures in the directions predicted. CONCLUSIONS: The PFS is a valid and reliable instrument to measure individual differences in multiple protective factors in families. The measure is an easily administered tool that offers programs an alternative to costly, time-intensive measures. PRACTICE IMPLICATIONS: The PFS offers community-based prevention programs a valid and reliable survey instrument that measures multiple protective factors. The subscales—Family Functioning, Emotional Support, Concrete Support, and Nurturing and Attachment—can be used by practitioners to understand the service
population more fully, inform services, and contribute to the evidence base of a protective factors approach. Practitioners can build on the strengths or protective factors in parents and select services to address areas that are less developed.


BOTTOM LINE: This study compared the effectiveness of Triple P: Positive Parenting Program for parents who were paid to participate vs. parents who were not paid. Parents were recruited from preschools in a German city and randomly assigned to group or individual Triple P with or without payment. Both paid and unpaid participants improved on nearly all measures after participation, with smaller improvements on three of the ten measures for paid participants. The authors note that payment led some families to participate who probably would not have done so without payment, and conclude that incentives for participation are a viable strategy for recruiting participants without damaging the effectiveness of a program.

SUMMARY: This study compared the effectiveness of Triple P: Positive Parenting Program for parents who were paid to participate vs. parents who were not paid. It was part of a larger study comparing individual Triple P vs. group-based Triple P. Parents were recruited from preschools in a German city and randomly assigned to one of four different conditions: individual Triple P with payment, individual without payment, group Triple P with payment, and group without payment. Recruitment rates were better for the paid conditions, but over half of the recruited parents still declined to participate. Both paid and unpaid participants improved on nearly all measures after participation; however on three of the ten measures, paid participants showed less improvement than unpaid. There were more differences when group-based or individual program condition was taken into account. Paid group participants – both mothers and fathers – had worse parenting skills after the program than did unpaid group participants. Paid individual intervention mothers had significantly better parenting skills than unpaid group participants. The authors note that payment led some families to participate who probably would not have done so without payment, and conclude that incentives for participation are a viable strategy for recruiting participants without damaging the effectiveness of a program.

ABSTRACT: To examine the impact of paying for participation in a preventive parenting program on treatment outcomes, 197 families with preschool-aged children were randomized to paid or unpaid conditions. Although both groups improved on nearly all measures, paid families showed less improvement on 3 of 10 variables, including father-reported child prosocial behavior and parenting skills and maternal distress. The interaction between payment and treatment format (individual vs. group) was examined. Compared to unpaid group participants, paid group intervention participants had significantly worse mother and father parenting skills posttreatment, whereas paid individual intervention mothers had significantly better skills. These findings suggest payment may lead to smaller treatment effects, although the bulk of the data point to no impact on outcomes. Given that payment attracts families who would not otherwise receive treatment, this appears to be a viable strategy to recruit families without appreciably impacting outcomes.
Recent Resources in the Field

Be sure to check out these prevention-related resources released by other organizations in recent months.

- **Preventing Shaken Baby Syndrome: Guide for Health Departments and Community-Based Organizations**
- **A Journalist’s Guide to Shaken Baby Syndrome: A Preventable Tragedy,** which also links to a video in English and Spanish
- **Coping With Crying:** Four public service radio announcements in English and Spanish

**Spotlight On: Research & Practice**

Each issue of the *Research Review* will feature an in-depth look at a topic in the field of child abuse and neglect prevention, in the form of an easily printed and shared fact sheet. The “Spotlight” will provide an overview of the topic area, summarize what we know about the topic, and highlight the related work of one or more state Children’s Trust Funds.

This introductory issue does not include a “Spotlight” topic. Keep an eye out for the May issue of the *Research Review*, which will include a Spotlight on Home Visiting: Research & Practice.
The Research-Savvy Practitioner

This regular feature of the Research Review discusses issues related to accessing, understanding, and applying research in your work in child abuse and neglect prevention.

ACCESSING RESEARCH ARTICLES

One of the reasons the Alliance of Children’s Trust and Prevention Funds decided to create the Research Review was the expressed need of Alliance members for more access to research findings that are relevant to their work. With the Research Review, we hope to keep you up to date with recent research findings and provide you the information you need in a way you can use it.

In some cases, you may find you want or need to access a full article summarized in the Research Review. Unfortunately, the majority of journal articles are available online only to journal subscribers and individuals affiliated with universities, or those who pay to access a specific article or issue of a journal. Single-article fees tend to be around $30–$40. Certain journals make all of their content accessible to anyone on the Web, while others will make certain articles available to the general public. Particularly in the case of program evaluations, the author or program developer may have gotten permission from the journal to include a PDF of the article on the program’s website.

In the citation for each journal article summarized in the Research Review, you’ll see a URL. Some will provide a link to the full text if it is available to the general public. If the full text is not available to the general public, the citation will say, “Available for purchase” and provide a link to the page where you can read the abstract and purchase the article. (Depending on the journal, you may also be able to view the article outline, the references, or other information without a subscription.) If you find that an article listed in the Research Review is available for free online, but the link was not included in the Research Review, please email the link, and we will update the listing so that others can also find the article.

Here are a few other strategies you could consider if you see an article you’re very interested in:

- Contact the author, explain how you want to use the article, and ask for a PDF or another summary of their findings. (You can usually find an author’s email address by searching for their name on the main website of their university, which should be listed with the article abstract on the journal’s website.) Most authors are eager to have their work used. Some may have summarized the same data in a more accessible format like an outreach piece, a policy brief, or a PowerPoint presentation.

- Work with an academic partner who has access to journal articles through their university library system. They may be able to share the occasional PDF or hard copy of an article with you, especially when it is relevant to their work.
Go online at a university library. Generally, when you access journal websites from a university computer, you will have all the benefits of the university’s subscriptions. Check with the librarians at your local college or university to find out what their policies are for guest use of the library and its computers. (Of course, you can also find hard copies of some journals in the library, if you’re more inclined to browse the stacks.)

That said, it is still important to respect copyright. It wouldn’t be appropriate to distribute articles widely if you access them in these ways. If you want to share something with your grantees or other partners, purchase the article or the full issue of the journal and request permission to share it before you do so. Most journals put a “request permissions” link with the article citations or on the table of contents page.